



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Guildhall,
Frankwell Quay,
Shrewsbury
SY3 8HQ
Date: Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Committee: Council

Date: Thursday, 17 July 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

Members of the Council – a briefing note will be circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting with important housekeeping details and arrangements for the meeting.

Members of the Public – If you wish to attend the meeting, please e-mail democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check whether a seat will be available for you.

Please click [here](#) to view the livestream of the meeting on the date and time stated on the agenda

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council Youtube Channel [Here](#)

Tim Collard
Service Director - Legal and Governance

Duncan Borrowman
(Chairman)
Gary Groves (Vice-Chair)
Heather Kidd (Leader)
Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader)
Sho Abdul
Caroline Bagnall
Elizabeth Barker
Bernie Bentick
Neil Bentley
Ed Bird
Jeremy Blandford
Andy Boddington
Thomas Clayton
Susan Coleman
Rachel Connolly
Tom Dainty
Jamie Daniels
Rosemary Dartnall
David Davies

Pamela Davies
Andy Davis
Julian Dean
Joshua Dickin
Mandy Duncan
Greg Ebbs
Susan Eden
Donna Edmunds
Craig Emery
Brian Evans
Roger Evans
Adam Fejfer
Rhys Gratton
Andy Hall
Kate Halliday
Harry Hancock-Davies
Nick Hignett
Alan Holford
George Hollyhead
Ruth Houghton

Dawn Husemann
Peter Husemann
Benedict Jephcott
Robert Jones
Duncan Kerr
Christopher Lemon
Nigel Lumby
Brendan Mallon
Sarah Marston
David Minnery
Vicky Moore
Mark Morris
Alan Mosley
Malcolm Myles-Hook
Chris Naylor
James Owen
Mark Owen
Wendy Owen
Vivienne Parry
Ed Potter

Rosie Radford
Sharon Ritchie-Simmons
Carl Rowley
Charles Shackerley-Bennett
Colin Stanford
Jon Tandy

Colin Taylor
Dan Thomas
Teri Trickett
David Vasmer
Beverley Waite
David Walker

Sam Walmsley
Alison Williams
Rob Wilson

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 May 2025

4 Announcements

To receive such communications as the Chairman, Leader and Head of Paid Service may desire to lay before the Council.

5 Public Questions

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is 12.00 noon on Friday 11 July 2025

6 Questions from Members

To receive any questions from Members, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2. Deadline for notification is 12.00 noon on Friday 11 July 2025

7 Financial Outturn 2024/25 (Pages 7 - 54)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

8 Annual Treasury Report 2024/25 (Pages 55 - 66)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

9 Annual Assurance Report of the Audit Committee to Council 2024/25 (Pages 67 - 82)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

10 Constitution of Committees and the Allocation of Seats to Political Groups - Audit Committee (Pages 83 - 88)

Report of the Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning is attached

Contact Tim Collard Tel 01743 252756

11 Pyrolysis Second Site Increase in Budget

The Report of the Assistant Director of Transformation and Efficiency is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: Billy Webster (billy.webster@shropshire.gov.uk)

12 Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy (Pages 89 - 244)

The Report of the Assistant Director of Transformation and Efficiency is attached.

Contact: Billy Webster (billy.webster@shropshire.gov.uk)

13 Withdrawal of Local Plan from Examination and Next Steps

Report of the Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact Tim Collard Tel 01743 252756

14 Appointments to Outside Bodies (Pages 245 - 258)

Report of the Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning is attached

Contact Tim Collard Tel 01743 252756

15 Special Responsibility Allowances for Deputy Portfolio Holders

Report of the Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact Tim Collard Tel 01743 252756

16 LGPS - Scheme of Delegation

Report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact Peter Chadderton. Tel. 07990 086399

17 Appointment to Committees (Pages 259 - 260)

18 Motions

The following motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

a Motion received from Councillor Ed Potter and supported by the Conservative Group

We all know that litter blights our roadside verges. This includes an increasing number of disused and broken temporary road signs which have been left behind and often over time lost in the undergrowth along our verges and roadside. In the Loton division this is a particular problem along the A5 and A458 as well as the more rural side roads. Once the growing season starts these signs often get covered by the vegetation and then are subsequently damaged by the hedge cutters which cut the verges. It would make sense when there are road closures on these busy roads that these disused highways signs, sandbags and traffic cones are removed. On the more minor roads and on traffic islands these could be collected by highways contractors whilst going about their daily routines and deposited back at highways depots for reuse or recycling. It is important to our residents that we all take civic pride in where we live and these simple actions of removing these discarded items will make a big difference.

1. Request that Shropshire Council Highways adopt a policy instructing all Highways works teams and contractors including utility companies who are permitted to work on the Highway remove disused and broken signs left behind by previous work schemes
2. Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive of National Highways to request their work teams and contractors operating in Shropshire adopt the same approach.

**b Motion received from Councillor Julian Dean and supported by the Green & Progressive Independent Group
Planning for a better Shropshire**

Shropshire Council recognises the need:

- to deliver the right homes, at the right price, in the right places to address the housing affordability crisis
- to provide clean energy infrastructure to support the UK's future energy needs
- to rapidly deliver projects that will help our natural environment to recover such that the UK is no longer one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

We believe these aims can all be delivered alongside robust local decision making given the right mix of regulation and funding.

Council notes:

- Revisions to the 'standard method' for calculating housing targets - which has increased the housing target for Shropshire from 1070 to 1994 - but with no target for social or affordable homes, and no significant change to viability assessments which result in affordable homes schemes being scrapped or reduced. The adopted 'stock based' Standard Method fails to properly assess this area's housing need or reflect the ability to grow and provide supporting infrastructure.
- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently passing through Parliament. Despite pleas from across the environmental sector and cross-party support for amendments, the Bill continues to include damaging changes to planning rules

such that the environmental movement has now come together to call on ministers to 'scrap part 3'.

- Proposed changes to planning decision making which will reduce the power of councils and councillors to act on behalf of their communities - this despite the fact that, nationally, 1.4 million homes had been granted planning permission since 2007 but not been built.

Council believes:

The combined effect of changes introduced by the government since last July, even when taking in to account the welcome additional funding for the Affordable Homes Programme (£39bn over 10 years), will in all likelihood fail to deliver the homes people need in Shropshire, damage efforts to recover our natural environment and further erode community trust in decision making.

Council resolves to:

1. Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, relevant Secretaries of State, as well as local MPs, expressing these concerns, and calling for the withdrawal of part 3 of the Planning and infrastructure Bill.
2. Ask our MPs to oppose measures in part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and, should these remain in the Bill, to vote against at final reading.
3. Request portfolio holders to accelerate completion of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Transport Plan and to ensure that these policies, together with Shrewsbury Moves, are made material considerations in planning as soon as possible, and ahead of any timetable for the revised Local Plan.
4. Request portfolio holders hold urgent meetings with Registered Providers to maximise the benefit to Shropshire from the uplift to the Affordable Homes Programme.
5. Share this resolution with neighbouring councils, local civic groups, nature organisations and the local press, to encourage wider opposition and coordinated advocacy.



Committee and Date

Council

17 July 2025

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2025

In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 - 10.20 am

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillors Duncan Borrowman (Chairman) and Heather Kidd (Leader), Gary Groves (Vice Chairman), Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader), Sho Abdul, Caroline Bagnall, Bernie Bentick, Neil Bentley, Ed Bird, Jeremy Blandford, Andy Boddington, Thomas Clayton, Susan Coleman, Rachel Connolly, Tom Dainty, Jamie Daniels, Rosemary Dartnall, David Davies, Pamela Davies, Andy Davis, Julian Dean, Joshua Dickin, Mandy Duncan, Greg Ebbs, Susan Eden, Craig Emery, Brian Evans, Roger Evans, Adam Fejfer, Rhys Gratton, Andy Hall, Harry Hancock-Davies, Nick Hignett, Alan Holford, George Hollyhead, Ruth Houghton, Dawn Husemann, Peter Husemann, Benedict Jephcott, Robert Jones, Duncan Kerr, Nigel Lumby, Brendan Mallon, Sarah Marston, David Minnery, Vicky Moore, Mark Morris, Alan Mosley, Malcolm Myles-Hook, Chris Naylor, James Owen, Mark Owen, Wendy Owen, Vivienne Parry, Ed Potter, Rosie Radford, Sharon Ritchie-Simmons, Carl Rowley, Colin Stanford, Jon Tandy, Colin Taylor, Dan Thomas, Teri Trickett, David Vasmer, Beverley Waite, David Walker, Sam Walmsley, Alison Williams and Rob Wilson

1 Election of Chairman

The retiring Chairman, Vince Hunt called for nominations for the election of Chairman of Shropshire Council.

It was proposed, seconded and duly **RESOLVED** that Councillor Duncan Borrowman be elected as Chairman of Shropshire Council to hold office until the Annual Meeting of Council on 14 May 2026

Councillor Barrowman then took the Chair and subscribed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before being invested with the Chairman's badge of office.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elizabeth Barker, Donna Edmunds, Kate Halliday, Chris Lemon and Charles Shackerley-Bennett

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman called for nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman of Shropshire Council.

It was proposed, seconded and duly **RESOLVED** that Councillor Gary Groves be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Shropshire Council to hold office until the Annual Meeting of Council on 14 May 2026

Councillor Groves subscribed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before being invested with the Vice-Chairman's badge of office.

4 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

5 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

6 **Return of Election of Shropshire Councillors**

Members received the report of the Returning Officer which set out those persons elected to Shropshire Council at the election held on 1 May 2025.

The Chairman asked Members to place on record its appreciation of the services of those Councillors who decided not to seek re-election or were not returned by the electorate.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that Council places on record its appreciation of the services of the following Councillors who decided not to seek re-election or were not returned by the electorate: -

Roy Aldcroft
Jeff Anderson
Nick Bardsley
Joyce Barrow
Tom Biggins
Peter Broomhall
Julia Buckley
Garry Burchett
Gwilym Butler
Dean Carroll
Steve Charmley
Ted Clarke
Gerald Dakin
Steve Davenport
Mary Davies
Geoff Elner
David Evans
Julia Evans
Nat Green
Paul Gill
Rob Gittins
Simon Harris
Nigel Hartin
Richard Huffer
Tracey Huffer

Vince Hunt
Kirstie Hurst-Knight
Mark Jones
Simon Jones
Christian Lea
Hilary Luff
Robert Macey
Dan Morris
Pam Moseley
Cecilia Motley
Peggy Mullock
Ian Nellins
Kevin Pardy
Tony Parsons
Lezley Picton
John Price
Chris Schofield
Andrew Sherrington
Robert Tindall
Edward Towers
Kevin Turley
Claire Wild
Brian Williams
Mark Williams
Paul Wynn

7 Announcements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by the previous Chairman and Vice Chairman since the last meeting of the Council on 27 February 2025, which had been emailed prior to the meeting.

8 Election of Leader of the Council

It was proposed by Councillor Alex Wagner and seconded by Councillor Gary Groves that Councillor Heather Kidd be elected Leader of Shropshire Council for the period to the Annual Council in 2029

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Heather Kidd be elected Leader of Shropshire Council for the period to the Annual Council in 2029

The Leader subscribed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and then thanked the Council for the honour of being the Leader of the Council.

9 Appointment of Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members and their Portfolios

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Gary Groves that the report of the Service Director. Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the appointment of Cabinet Members and the allocation of titles and remits of portfolios, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be noted.
- B. That the appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members and the allocation of titles and remits of portfolios, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be noted.
- C. (i) That the continuation of the discharge of the functions of the Council in relation to West Mercia Energy through the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee and the West Mercia Energy Pension Committee be noted and the Council's Executive Member representatives be noted, namely Councillor Roger Evans and Councillor Rob Wilson serving on the Joint Committee.

(ii) That the continuation of the discharge of functions through the Health and Well-Being Board be noted and the Council's Executive representatives be noted, namely: Councillors Ruth Houghton, Bernie Bentick and Heather Kidd

10 Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Duncan Barrowman and seconded by Councillor Gary Groves that the report of the Service Director. Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2025/26 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

11 Appointment to Outside Bodies, Committees and Other Groups

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by the Deputy Leader Councillor Alex Wagner that the report of the Service Director. Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the urgent appointments to the outside bodies, committees and groups set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed,

2. That, the Chief Executive appoints members to the remaining outside bodies, committees and groups following consultation with a small working group comprised of Group Leaders or their nominated representatives, and that any bodies where agreement cannot be reached by the Working Group be referred back to Council for decision. These appointments will be reported to the July meeting of Council.
3. That, the Chief Executive in consultation with appropriate Group Leaders be authorised to agree any other appointment that may be necessary as a matter of urgency prior to the meeting of the working group referenced in paragraph 2.

12 Scheme of Delegation

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by the Deputy Leader Councillor Alex Wagner that the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Responsibility for Functions, set out in Part 3 of the Constitution and the updated Scheme of Delegations, set out in Part 8 of the Constitution be agreed as outlined within this report and as set out in Appendix 1.

13 Dates of Council Meetings

RESOLVED:

That meetings of the Council in 2025 – 2026 would be held on the following Thursdays, commencing at 10.00 am.:

17 July 2025
25 September 2025
11 December 2025
26 February 2026
26 March 2026
14 May 2026

14 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

15 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Committee and Date

Transformation &
Improvement Scrutiny
9th June 2025

Cabinet
11th June 2025

Audit Committee
26 June 2025

Council
17th July 2025

Item

Public



Financial Outturn 2024/25

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258915
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder Finance		

1. Synopsis

The report gives a detailed review of Shropshire Council's 2024/25 financial performance. Key issues include Children's Services primarily increased residential placements, savings in Adult Social Care more than offset by demand and inflationary increases and non-delivery of savings in Place and Resources Directorates.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report provides a detailed review of Shropshire Council 2024/25 financial performance for revenue and capital.

2.2. The key issues for the Council's financial performance in 2024/25 highlighted by this report are summarised below, delivered within the requirements of The Shropshire Plan. The Council has:

Table 1: 2024/25 Budget Variations by Service Area (£'000)

Directorate	Revised Budget (£'000)	Controllable Outturn (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (%)	RAGY Classification
Health & Wellbeing	5,992	5,503	(489)		Y
People	214,687	245,931	31,244		R
Place	51,651	66,722	15,071		R
Resources	3,782	8,463	4,681		R
Strategic Management Board	(23)	295	318		R
Service Delivery Budgets	276,089	326,914	50,825	18.4%	
Corporate	(14,392)	(30,987)	(16,595)		Y
Total Net Expenditure	261,697	295,927	34,230	13.1%	
Funded By:					
Council Tax	(205,104)	(205,104)			
Business Rates	(41,306)	(41,306)			
Top Up Grant	(10,925)	(10,925)			
Revenue Support Grant	(7,974)	(7,974)			
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	3,612	3,612)			
Total Funding	(261,697)	(261,697)			
Net Total Expenditure	0	34,230	34,230	13.1%	

2.3. The key factors affecting the year end position for overall service delivery were:

- Activity in some areas in Children's Services was higher than anticipated when setting the budget impacting on Children's and other related support services spending over the year. Children services have supported more children to step down from residential care to a family home in 2024/2025 but due to a lack of available and appropriate foster family placements there was a 28% increase in external residential placements since the beginning of the year as well as a shortfall in contributions from other partners towards joint funded social care led placements. Year end movements have been substantial in this regard, with a deterioration of almost £2m (8%)
- Increased demand against Home to School Transport saw an increase in costs at year end of 0.4m (2%). The majority of this increase related to SEND Transport where there has been a significant increase in the number of children with EHC Plans requiring transport. However, it should be noted that costs for Home to School Transport for children and young people without an EHCP account for half of the overall budget.
- Adult Social Care saw a significant movement at year end from that projected at Period 11 of £15m (12%). High demand and inflationary year on year increases have been signalled over the last two years and every effort made to manage this within available budgets. The service has aimed to mitigate growth in year as well as the inflationary increases across the social care market, to support the council's financial position delivering for the second financial year in a row over £17m savings. Change activity across the service has delivered improved outcomes for residents, increased savings and cost avoidance and improvements in service delivery outcomes. This has, however, been more than offset by challenging demand levels, clarified in the year end reconciliation resulting in a significant deterioration from the projected position at Period 11. Together these pressures have resulted in net spend totalling £143m in Adult Social Care operations, an overspend of £17.3m compared to available budget. In 2023/24 £20.5m was allocated from reserves to help manage pressures in Social Care. In 2024/25 a similar release of reserves has been required but this time, rather than applying them against the service area they have been applied

corporately. This approach specifically highlights the significant underfunding in this area compared to levels of need and the actual levels of expenditure required, making this fully visible. This should not distract from the enormous efforts of staff to contain demand pressures as far as possible. Pressures in Adult Services over the financial year have crystallised in outturn figures, including:

- Income levels were down due to the transfer of people from assumed health funding to Local Authority funding.
 - Cost increases in numbers of people in placements due to capital reductions from self-funders.
 - Increased market pressure and complexity for people in Supported Living.
 - Winter pressures becoming visible at a late stage
- Services within the former Place Directorate have seen very little variance at year end due to the nature of the service provision. Nevertheless, significant under delivery against budgeted savings targets have been flagged throughout the year and delivered a year end overspend of £15m.
- Corporate budgets include pension costs, financing budgets, corporate grants and other non-operational grants. Year end reconciliations of Treasury Management activity and certain Section 31 grants often deliver a surplus at year end, although this cannot be relied upon and is therefore unbudgeted. The outturn position has shown a substantial improvement compared to period 11 in Treasury management, section 31 grants relating to business rates retention and spending against equipment budgets. These demonstrate a £5m improvement at year end.
- Although there is a degree of netting off in the year end position across the Council, the bottom line has deteriorated to the extent that a review of earmarked reserves was necessary (as reflected in Appendix 8). The development reserve, partially decommitted (£8.6m) due to the application of the Capitalisation Directive made available in 2024/25 through Exceptional Financial Support, has been applied to maintain a minimum level of General Fund Balance.
- Additionally, there was a £15.096m in year deficit reported against the Central Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), leaving a cumulative DSG deficit of £17.639m at the end of the financial year. This deficit does not presently need to be accounted for within the Council's budget due to a statutory override provided through legislation, although that is due to expire, nationally, in March 2026.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:
- a) Consider, with appropriate comment, this report and the recommendations made to Cabinet below.
- 3.2. It is recommended that Cabinet Members:
- In respect of the revenue budget:**
- a) Note that the outturn for overall variance in the year is £34.230m above budget.
 - b) Note that the consequent level of the General Fund Balance is £4.823m.

- c) Note the use of £7.726m of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions and the resulting level of earmarked reserves of £25.455m (£18.762m if the balances held by schools are excluded).
- d) Note the £47.194m savings delivery achieved over the year
- e) Note that the combination of earmarked and un-earmarked (General) reserves of £33.275m is below a level that would be regarded as appropriate, taking into account local circumstances. The MTFS sets out an agreed plan to restore these balances to safer levels.

In respect of ringfenced funding:

- f) Note the performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - £3.124m (13%) surplus outturn for 2024/25 on £23.054m turnover, and the resulting level of the HRA reserve of £14.861m.
- g) Note the outturn for the DSG and the consequent level of the DSG reserve.
- h) Note that the level of school balances has decreased by £0.647m, from £7.340m in 2023/24 to £6.693m, in the financial year.

In respect of the capital programme:

- i) Approve the net budget variations of £1.946m to the 2024/25 capital programme (in Appendix 9) and the re-profiled 2024/25 capital budget of £112.640m.
- j) Approve the re-profiled capital budgets of £152.574m for 2025/26, including slippage of £4.819m from 2024/25, £72.350m for 2026/27 and £45.212m for 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 13.
- k) Accept the outturn expenditure set out in Appendices 10 and 11 of £107.820m representing 95.7% of the revised capital budget for 2024/25.
- l) Approve retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £24.432m as at 31st March 2025 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.222m in 2025/26.

3.3. It is recommended that Audit Committee Members:

- a) Consider, with appropriate comment, the Outturn Report alongside the Council's Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The management of the Council's Budget is a key process in ensuring the strategic risks are mitigated and the Council can carry out the business as intended and planned for within the Financial Strategy.
- 4.2. When the Council set the Financial Strategy in February 2024, which underpins this report, it considered the requirements of the relevant legislation and any necessary service user consultation.
- 4.3. The financial results for 2024/25 were lower than anticipated but have been able to be funded using reserves. This highlights an ongoing risk that effective action to address and improve the forecast was not able to be delivered within the year.

4.4. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Revenue budget risks – the issues underlying the outturn position remain into the next financial year	The budget for 2024/25 included growth for known demand pressures and inflationary pressures. Also, any known pressures were included as growth items. Additional funding has been built into the General Fund for 2025/26 and so can provide some resilience for any unforeseen pressures, however it is recognised that the General Fund Balance is not at a sufficient level to provide for all potential financial risks that could occur.
Capital budget risks - inflationary pressures as the construction sector in particular is often highly exposed to price increases, and programme slippages as schemes are delivered slower (or faster) than anticipated. Also risks around generation of capital receipts for funding capital schemes, and transformation costs.	The capital programme is reviewed quarterly and any updates or revisions to the capital programme are included within the review. A working group is set up to track delivery against capital receipts and progress for the year is detailed within the quarterly financial report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. This is the subject of the report. Failure to constrain spending within budgets leads to overspending, which must then be funded from un-earmarked reserves in the form of the General Fund Balance (GFB). The Council should carry GFB of 5%-15% of turnover, around £15m- £30m. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved by Full Council in February 2025, includes provision to increase the general fund balance to these levels, provided that all spending for the year is constrained within the budgeted levels. This has not proved possible in 2024/25.
- 5.2. The MTFs also included an assessment of the level of risk being faced by the authority, across all areas of financial management. This concluded that the prudent level of reserves should be £50m based on that assessment. The council is moving towards a higher level of reserves, but this in itself must be risk-assessed and balanced against the impact on revenue budgets (a contribution to reserves is an expense, which will therefore increase required savings).

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy supports its strategies for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction in a number of ways. The future programme includes programmes to support a range of initiatives such as moving to LED street lighting; enabling agile and mobile working (including a move to hybrid working at the Council with officers predominantly working from home which has also helped to

reduce officer travel); and support for Park and Ride schemes to reduce car emissions within the town centres.

- 6.2. A specific climate change revenue budget is held in 2024/25 and further details about spend in this area is included in Appendix 1 to this report. Several areas of spend in the climate change budget are invest-to save or future income generating schemes such as energy generation with solar PV or building energy efficiency measures. The climate change schemes involving the Council's assets or infrastructure are included within the capital programme of which further detail can be found within Appendix 15.

7. Background

- 7.1. Budget monitoring reports are produced monthly with a more detailed assessment undertaken quarterly for Cabinet, highlighting the anticipated year end projection compared to available budget. The outturn report removes all projections and confirms the actual year end position compared to those earlier projections.
- 7.2. The monitoring reports track progress against agreed budget decisions, consider any budget changes (including re-profiling on Capital), forecast any significant variances to the budget, and enable corrective action to be taken to ensure a balanced budget at year end. Capital schemes are similarly reported on an exception basis.

8. Savings Delivery

- 8.1. 52% of the 2024/25 savings required have been delivered. This amounted to £47.194m in value. As a percentage of net budget, but also in absolute terms, this is likely to be the highest level of savings delivered within one financial year of any local authority in the country. Almost 58% of these savings (£27m) were delivered across the People Directorate, (adult and children social care and learning and skills) this is on top of £22m savings delivered by the people directorate in 23/24.
- 8.2. There were £42.812m of savings that have not been achieved in 2024/25, some of these part of a two year programme of which £41.181m will be carried forward to 2025/26 to be delivered in year two. The savings outturn in 2024/25 is presented in Appendix 3. The impact on the outturn position of the savings that have not been delivered can be seen in Appendix 4.

9. General Fund Balance

- 9.1. A breakdown of transactions impacting on the General Fund in 2024/25 are detailed in Appendix 6 and this shows an overall reduction in the balance held of £4.823m. The MTFS approved in February 2025 includes provision to increase this to more appropriate levels, provided that spending is held within budgeted levels in the new financial year.

10. Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn for 2024/25 shows a surplus of £3.124m against a budgeted surplus of £1.806m, giving a £1.318m variance against the approved budget. This was mainly due to increased income for

enhanced services provided through the HRA in addition to a larger than expected interest receipt due to higher interest rates on balances held within the HRA. As at 31 March 2025 the HRA reserve stood at £14.861m. A breakdown of the HRA is provided at Appendix 7.

11. Dedicated Schools Grant

- 11.1. There was a £15.096m in year deficit reported against the Central Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), leaving a cumulative DSG deficit of £17.639m at the end of the financial year. This in year-deficit was due to an in-year overspend reported on the High Needs Block of DSG totalling £15.464m. There was also an overspend of £0.022m against school's de-delegated items, an underspend of £0.091m against the Council's Schools Growth funding allocation, a £0.240m underspend on the Council's Early Years Block DSG allocation, as well as a £0.059m underspend reported against the Council's Central Schools Services Block DSG allocation.
- 11.2. The overspend on High Needs Blocks of £15.464m is across several areas. The largest overspend was against the budget for Independent Special School placements (£5.957m). The Council has experienced a continued increase in demand for Independent Special School placements as evidenced by the number of new placements. This is a trend that was identified in 2022-23, was even more pronounced in 2023-24 and has continued in 2024-25 although the percentage increase in new placements has slowed relative to 2023-24. Another trend is the continued, more frequent use of independent alternative providers, particularly in relation to children who are post 16. Also, the average termly cost of a placement has increased in 2024-25 reflecting price inflationary pressures and an increase in the complexity of children and young people's needs.
- 11.3. There have also been large overspends in relation to top-up funding. There was a £3.748m overspend on top-up funding paid to Special Schools. Some of the overspend was related to the planned increase in commissioned place numbers at the newest Special School, Keystone Academy, while the majority of the overspend relates to a banding review at the largest Special School, Severndale Specialist Academy. Part of this was a one-off payment backdated to September 2023. An overspend of £3.918m is also reported against the top-up funding to mainstream school budgets. The spend on this budget line includes top-up funding to SEND Hubs attached to mainstream schools, which the Council has continued to grow capacity and invest in SEND Hubs, in line with local and national SEND strategies. The Council has also seen an increase in expenditure in 2024-25 relating to SEN Support Services resulting in a £1.844m overspend against this budget line.
- 11.4. Council Officers are currently working on a DSG Management Plan which sets out potential mitigations against the High Need Block DSG and illustrates how these mitigations will bring the DSG financial position back into balanced position over an agreed period of time. A meeting has been arranged with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to discuss this plan on 7th July, and this DSG Management Plan will be presented to Schools Forum.

12. Reserves and Provisions

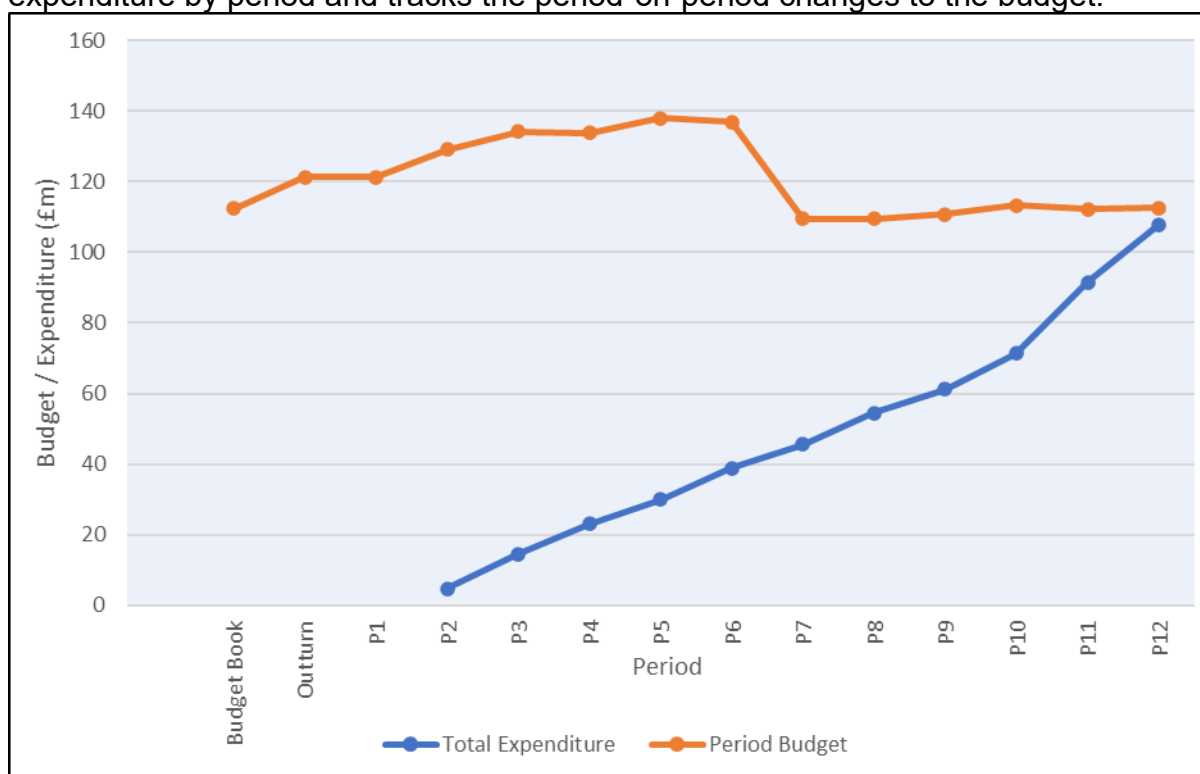
- 12.1. The overall position for reserves and provisions is set out in the Statement of Accounts 2024/25, however a detailed breakdown of the balances is contained at Appendix 8 and shows an overall reduction of £7.079m in reserves and provision (excl. delegated schools balances).

13. Original & Final Capital Programme for 2024/25

- 13.1. The capital budget for 2024/25 was subject to a review of all projects at Quarter 3 and re-profiling where required into future years with no further re-profiling into future years being anticipated during Quarter 4. However, in Quarter 4 it has been necessary to undertake further re-profiling of -£0.515m. Additionally, in Quarter 4 there has been a net budget increase of £2.461m for 2024/25. In total, therefore, during Quarter 4 there has been a net budget increase of £1.946m compared to the position reported at Quarter 3 2024/25. Appendix 9 summarises the overall movement, between that already approved and changes for Quarter 4 that require approval.

14. Capital Outturn Position and Financing

- 14.1. Outturn projections are incorporated into the capital monitor to enhance the monitoring information provided and allow the early identification where schemes are deviating from budget. Appendix 10 summarises the outturn position for 2024/25.
- 14.2. Total capital expenditure for 2024/25 was £107.820m, which equated to 95.7% of the re-profiled capital programme of £112.640m. The graph below shows actual expenditure by period and tracks the period-on-period changes to the budget.



14.3. There was a total variance of £4.819m between the revised Outturn Budget and the Outturn Expenditure. This underspend will be slipped to future years to facilitate completion of projects in delivery during in 2025-26 and beyond as required following a review of expected profiles. A summary of significant variances by directorate and service area are provided In Appendix 11.

14.4. Appendix 12 summarises the financing of the 2024/25 capital programme, changes made to Quarter 3 and to be approved to Quarter 4.

14.5. Within the financing of the Capital Programme £1.260m is funded from revenue contributions. The major areas of revenue contributions to capital are HRA house repurchases (£0.167m), essential repairs in relation to the Corporate Landlord estate (£0.386m), Highways schemes (£0.157m), Homes & Communities schemes (0.140m), Passenger Transport vehicles (£0.256m) and Schools revenue contributions to various capital schemes (0.154m).

15. Projected Future Capital Programme

15.1. The updated capital programme and the financing of the programme is summarised by year in Appendix 13.

15.2. The Corporate Resources financing line is the element of internal resources through capital receipts and corporately financed prudential borrowing required to finance the programme.. The Council continues to consider proposals for new schemes to invest in, with an emphasis on invest to save schemes and schemes that generate revenue savings as a result of either the generation of revenue income or the delivery of revenue savings.

16. Capital Receipts Position

16.1. Appendix 14 summarises the current allocated and projected capital receipt position across 2024-25 to 2027-28

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2028/29, Council – 29 February 2024

Financial Rules

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2024/25, Cabinet – 11 September 2024

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 2024/25, Cabinet – 20 November 2024

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2024/25, Cabinet – 12 February 2025

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – 2024/25 Budget Variations by Service

Appendix 2 – Movement in Projections Between Q3 and Outturn

Appendix 3 – Update on Delivery of 2024/25 Savings Proposals

Appendix 4 – Reconciliation of Monitoring Projections to Savings Delivery

Appendix 5 – Amendments to Original Budget

Appendix 6 – General Fund Balance

Appendix 7 – Housing Revenue Account

Appendix 8 – Reserves and Provision 2024/25

Appendix 9 – Revised Capital Programme

Appendix 10 – Capital Programme Outturn Position by Directorate 2024/25

Appendix 11 – Summary of Significant Variances Between Revised Capital Budget & Outturn Expenditure by Directorate and Service Area For 2024-25

Appendix 12 – Revised Capital Programme Financing 2024/25

Appendix 13 – Capital Programme 2025/26 To 2027/28

Appendix 14 – Projected Capital Receipts Position

Appendix 15 – Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2024/25

APPENDIX 1

2024/25 BUDGET VARIATIONS BY SERVICE

1.1 Summary

Revenue variances are reported on an exception basis depending on the total variance from budget, and the percentage change in projection in any one period.

- Green - variance +/- 1% (or £0.05m if budget less than £5m)
- Amber - overspend between 1%-2% (or £0.05m-£0.1m if budget less than £5m)
- Red - variance over 2% (or £0.1m if budget less than £5m)
- Yellow - underspend more than 1% (or £0.05m if budget less than £5m)

Directorate	Full Year			RAGY
	Revised Budget £	Controllable Outturn £	(Under)/Overspend £	
Health & Wellbeing	5,992	5,503	(489)	Y
People	214,687	245,931	31,244	R
Place	51,651	66,722	15,071	R
Resources	3,782	8,463	4,681	R
Strategic Management Board	(23)	295	318	R
Service Delivery Budgets	276,089	326,914	50,825	
Corporate Budgets	(14,392)	(30,987)	(16,595)	Y
Total	261,697	295,927	34,230	

1.2 Summary

Directorate Summary

Directorate Summary

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R009	CORPORATE BUDGETS		(14,391,730.00)	(30,986,352.34)	(16,594,622.34)	Y
A1R009: Corporate Budgets		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA057	Corporate Budgets	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(14,391,730.00)	(30,986,352.34)	(16,594,622.34)	Y
• £10.560m Corporate MTFS savings targets yet to be delivered in base budget and offset by one-off arrangements set out below • £1.741m to fund a provision for known redundancy costs committed to in 2024/25 but to be incurred in 2025/26 • (£0.354m) various minor budget variations • (£0.428m) additional Levy Accounts Surplus distribution from government • (£0.686m) higher than expected returns from West Mercia Energy • (£0.701m) savings in Corporate transformation and invest to save budgets through the application of the in-year capitalisation direction 2024/25 • (£1.064m) equipment budgets decommitted during 2024/25 • (£1.940m) additional Section 31 grant for Business Rate Retention • (£4.250m) use of Financial Strategy Reserve • (£4.711m) additional income and savings through Treasury Management Activities including interest earned on loans provided to Cornovii during the year, reduced interest payable due to renegotiation of market loan terms • (£6.153m) staffing budgets contingency not committed during 2024/25, however this has been released in 2025/26 budget setting. • (£8.609m) use of Development Reserve						
Total A1R009: Corporate Budgets			(14,391,730.00)	(30,986,352.34)	(16,594,622.34)	

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R011	HEALTH & WELLBEING		5,991,670.00	5,502,898.81	(488,771.19)	Y
A1R011: Health and Wellbeing		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA007	Regulatory Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,342,190.00	1,276,411.31	(65,778.69)	Y
Minor Variance to budget						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA008	Business and Consumer Protection	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,871,590.00	1,488,102.24	(383,487.76)	Y
• (£0.383m) spend under budget mainly due to VR posts contributing to corporate savings, vacant post and restructure						
RSA011	Ring Fenced Public Health Services	Adult Social Care and Public Health	-	-	-	G
No Variance to budget						
RSA025	Planning Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	(144,230.00)	(261,037.36)	(116,807.36)	Y
• (£0.117m) Planning Services – increased income compared to budget.						
RSA035	Libraries	Culture and Digital	2,907,770.00	2,854,408.83	(53,361.17)	Y
Minor Variance to budget						
RSA044	Business Improvement: Data, Analysis and Intelligence	Culture and Digital	14,350.00	145,013.79	130,663.79	R
• £0.131m overspend in transformation work, mitigated by savings from the Voluntary Redundancy programme.						
Total A1R011: Health and Wellbeing			5,991,670.00	5,502,898.81	(488,771.19)	

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R010	PEOPLE		214,686,560.00	245,930,829.49	31,244,269.49	R
A1R010: People		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA001	Adult Social Care Business Support and Development	Adult Social Care and Public Health	(2,399,860.00)	(2,796,175.46)	(396,315.46)	Y
• (£0.361m) Capitalisation of posts for transformational projects across several teams.						
RSA002	Adult Social Care Management	Adult Social Care and Public Health	978,830.00	635,908.16	(342,921.84)	Y
• (£0.343m) Capitalisation of posts for transformational projects						
RSA003	Adult Social Care Provider Services	Adult Social Care and Public Health	3,924,150.00	3,913,894.55	(10,255.45)	Y
• Minor Variance to budget at Period 12						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA005	Adult Social Care Operations	Adult Social Care and Public Health	125,700,510.00	142,972,755.01	17,272,245.01	R
• Additional spend in purchasing of £13.534m The key elements of the purchasing spend are: £8.198m Supported Living spend £5.694m SPOT Purchasing spend for people transferred from Health to the Local Authority. - a number of disputed cases which were not resolved by the end of the year relating to CHC income. - continued pressure on long term older persons care due to the increased number of capital reductions. offset by (£0.320m) additional income from client deferred payment agreement. • £3.505m unachieved savings these are organisational savings relating to rightsizing the organisation and efficiency savings • £0.145m spend over budget on transport services						
RSA017	Shire Services	Housing and Assets	0.00	(217,008.20)	(217,008.20)	Y
• There was a £0.217m surplus in 2024/25 that has then been transferred to the general fund to partially repay Shire's Services deficit relating to previous years						
RSA018	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	Children & Education	20,831,700.00	24,210,577.71	3,378,877.71	R
• £1.418m spend over budget on staffing across the Social Work Teams, largely relating to Agency Social Workers • £0.791m savings target unachievable relates to efficiency savings targets across the whole of Children's Social Care • £0.560m spend over budget relates to other costs such as transport recharges and taxi costs, childcare payments, parenting and medical assessments and interpreting fees. • £0.401m spend over budget relates to Disabled Children's budget area with £0.367m of the value explained by DCT prevention and Support payments • £0.270m "low value efficiencies" savings target was unachieved. • £0.137m spend over budget relates to Adoption Services. There was a £0.253m spend over budget on Adoption Allowances but this is partially offset by a spend under budget on Intra-Agency adoption placements. • (£0.022m) spend under budget relates to Leaving Care accommodation and allowances • (£0.175m) net under spend against budget on Public Law Outline support packages.						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA019	Children's Early Help & Placements	Children & Education	41,357,160.00	47,316,911.90	5,959,751.90	R
• £6.227m spend over budget on External Residential Placements. £4.842m is explained by an increase in External Residential placements (28% increase between 31/3/24 and 31/3/25) leading to an increase in expenditure in 2024/25. The remaining £1.385m of this pressure relates to a shortfall in contributions from other partners towards joint funded social care led placements. • £2.189m spend over budget on Fostering. The majority relates to External Fostering (£1.643m), partly explained by a portion of £1m savings target which was not achieved on an ongoing basis in 2023/24. • £0.343m unachieved savings are organisational savings relating to rightsizing the organisation, third party spend and efficiency savings across the whole of Early Help. • £0.181m spend over budget on staffing across the Social Work Teams, largely relating to Agency Social Workers. • £0.067m spend over budget relates to other costs such as transport recharges and taxi costs, childcare payments, parenting and medical assessments and interpreting fees. • (£0.043m) net under spend against budget on Youth Support Team. • (£0.195m) spend under budget against Early Help staffing. The service implemented a new staffing structure from 1st June so staff turnover has been high and several posts have remained vacant as the service has restructured • (£0.725m) net under spend against budget on Internal Residential Placements. Expenditure of £0.618m relating to one of the Council's new children's homes has been capitalised during 2024/25 which explains the majority of the spend under budget. • (£0.830m) spend under budget against Early Help Non-staffing, including the maximisation of Supporting Families Grant • There is a credit of (£1.255m) relating to the capitalisation of posts as a one-off working on transformational projects (Stepping Stones Project).						
RSA021	Learning and Skills	Children & Education	18,214,790.00	21,662,935.67	3,448,145.67	R
• £3.749m spend over budget against Home to School Transport. £2.399m of this relates to SEND Transport where there has been a significant increase in the number of children with EHC Plans requiring transport. The remaining variance of £1.350m relates to mainstream transport and the Children's transport Fleet. • £0.134m spend over budget relates to the fully-traded Schools Library Service • (£0.058m) relating to the capitalisation of a post as a one-off working on transformational projects within Learning & Skills Business Support • (£0.061m) relating to maximising the use of grants to fund staff within Learning & Skills Business Support • (£0.068m) relating to the net spend under budget on the Academy Conversions budget • (£0.097m) one-off efficiencies across both staffing and non-staffing budgets within Learning & Skills Business Support. • (£0.151m) relating to maximising the use of grants to fund staff within Children-Looked-After Education (Virtual School).						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA070	People Directorate Management	Adult Social Care and Public Health	(1,088,800.00)	2,879,714.48	3,968,514.48	R
£3.969m spend over budget relates largely to unachieved efficiency savings						
RSA075	Public Transport	Highways	7,168,080.00	5,351,315.67	(1,816,764.33)	Y
(£1.266m) Department for Transport Grants applied for the provision of Public Transport and contributions received towards Bus Services (within the boundary and Cross Boundary) (£0.551m) Savings achieved resulting from changes in the Concessionary Fares reimbursement model						
Total A1R010: People			214,686,560.00	245,930,829.49	31,244,269.49	

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Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R003	PLACE		51,651,350.00	66,721,730.23	15,070,380.23	R
A1R003: Place		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA004	Housing Services	Housing and Assets	4,205,260.00	3,719,589.78	(485,670.22)	Y
£0.442m Activity higher than budgeted for Temporary Accommodation (£0.701m) Additional Housing Benefit (one-off) income achieved (£0.207m) One-off saving on housing contracts (£0.035m) Low value efficiencies achieved						
RSA006	Bereavement Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	270,710.00	262,035.48	(8,674.52)	Y
Minor variance to budget						
RSA012	Assistant Director Commercial Services	Housing and Assets	(4,652,630.00)	87,504.39	4,740,134.39	R
Corporate MTFS targets not realised						
RSA013	Corporate Landlord, Property and Development	Housing and Assets	3,680,900.00	3,297,406.71	(383,493.29)	Y
- Overall savings achieved from a combination of increased income, reduced utility costs across the portfolio, offset by small increase in PFI costs. - Additional Savings in Property Services through service restructure & VR						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA023	Director of Place	Housing and Assets	323,210.00	480,276.32	157,066.32	R
• Corporate MTFS targets not realised						
RSA024	Assistant Director Economy & Place	Growth and Regeneration	(708,920.00)	212,410.99	921,330.99	R
• Corporate MTFS targets not realised						
RSA026	Economic Growth	Growth and Regeneration	1,189,200.00	1,006,615.20	(182,584.80)	Y
• Additional project funding received						
RSA027	Broadband	Culture and Digital	150,330.00	41,278.20	(109,051.80)	Y
• Vacancy savings and project activity recharged to capital						
RSA028	Policy and Environment	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,780,590.00	1,817,571.27	36,981.27	G
• Minor Variance to budget						
RSA030	Culture, Leisure & Tourism Development	Culture and Digital	14,760.00	3,935.44	(10,824.56)	Y
• Minor variance to budget						
RSA031	Highways & Transport	Highways	10,112,770.00	13,510,260.35	3,397,490.35	R
• £1.624m contract savings not fully realised • £1.246m Winter Maintenance Reserve shortfall • £1.253m shortfall on Parking Income • £1.193m Borrowing Costs & Interest • (£1.029m) Streetworks additional Income • (£0.500m) transfer from Kier Pension reserve • (£0.393m) Street lighting Energy efficiencies • (£0.090m) Cross service savings						
RSA032	Shropshire Hills National Landscape	Culture and Digital	35,020.00	36,688.00	1,668.00	G
• Minor variance to budget						
RSA033	Outdoor Partnerships	Culture and Digital	1,156,650.00	1,083,533.34	(73,116.66)	Y
• Minor variance to budget						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA034	Leisure	Culture and Digital	1,979,980.00	2,183,051.19	203,071.19	R
• Unachieved savings targets relating to closure of leisure centres						
RSA036	Museums and Archives	Culture and Digital	1,118,730.00	896,374.70	(222,355.30)	Y
• Spend below budget due to delay of Invest 2 Save payment & salary savings through Voluntary Redundancy.						
RSA037	Theatre Services	Culture and Digital	18,750.00	(628,170.23)	(646,920.23)	Y
• Additional net income						
RSA038	Waste Management	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	34,468,390.00	36,780,414.65	2,312,024.65	R
• £2.250m shortfall on Green Waste charges (budgeted full year at 70% take up, actual 5 months at 56%) • £2.000m Shortfall on Waste PFI contract re-negotiation based on delayed implementation • £0.210m Shortfall on Household Recycling Centre savings due to delayed closure. • (£2.150m) Savings on PFI contract (Inflationary increase for 24-25 being less than originally budgeted)						
RSA058	Assistant Director Highways and Transport	Highways	(2,070,890.00)	236,442.72	2,307,332.72	R
• Corporate MTFS targets not realised						
RSA060	Head of Culture, Leisure & Tourism	Culture and Digital	170,090.00	122,997.21	(47,092.79)	Y
• Minor variance to budget						
RSA062	Climate Change	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	(212,700.00)	139,673.23	352,373.23	R
• Delayed implementation of Pyrolysis Plant £0.270m • Delayed implementation of Maesbury Solar Farm £0.125m offset by some staffing savings.						
RSA063	Highway Policy & Strategic Infrastructure	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	1,632,170.00	1,768,016.30	135,846.30	R
• Shrewsbury Town Council grounds maintenance contract savings not fully achieved						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA064	Assistant Director Homes and Communities	Housing and Assets	(2,529,850.00)	159,161.89	2,689,011.89	R
• £2.612m Corporate MTFS savings yet to be realised • £0.077m Low value efficiencies unachieved						
RSA065	Housing Development and HRA	Housing and Assets	60,250.00	46,083.10	(14,166.90)	Y
• Minor variance to budget						
Total A1R003: Place			51,651,350.00	66,721,730.23	15,070,380.23	

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R012	RESOURCES		3,781,910.00	8,462,606.06	4,680,696.06	R
A1R012: Resources		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA009	Registrars and Coroners	Planning and Regulatory Services	451,920.00	419,240.97	(32,679.03)	Y
• Minor variance to budget.						
RSA042	Automation and Technology	Culture and Digital	152,210.00	(958,007.42)	(1,110,217.42)	Y
• £1.000m savings not yet achieved in full relating to right sizing the organisation, third party spend, new operating model activity and income generation. A big proportion of these are offset against other variances as below to mitigate in-year. • (£0.121m) additional income generated via postages • (£0.442m) reduction across various IT contracts and income generation from IT trading • (£0.743m) additional capitalisation of staff and transformational activity across the area. • (£0.809m) Vacancy management across all Automation & Technology						
RSA045	Human Resources and Organisational Development	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	7,880.00	612,971.75	605,091.75	R
• Net savings relating to rightsizing the organisation under budget £0.732m • In year saving efficiencies across supplies and services budgets (£0.100m) • Income above expected budget in relation to ticket sales and fees and charges (£0.25m)						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA047	Finance	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	2,155,420.00	3,928,031.13	1,772,611.13	R
• £2.883m savings not yet achieved in full relating to right sizing the organisation, third party spend, new operating model activity and income generation. A proportion of these are offset against other variances as below to mitigate in-year. • (£0.057m) other minor reductions in spend against supplies and services. • (£0.188m) additional capitalisation of staff and transformational activity across the area. • (£0.866m) Vacancy management across all finance teams.						
RSA050	Pensions	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(12,890.00)	8,037.04	20,927.04	G
• Minor variance to budget.						
RSA051	Commissioning Development and Procurement	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(22,060.00)	132,855.04	154,915.04	R
• £0.158m reduced income from the Matrix rebate due to transfer of service to OPUS which should deliver wider organisational savings						
RSA052	Risk Management	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(30,130.00)	115,952.39	146,082.39	R
• £0.146m Risk management recharges less than budgeted						
RSA053	Democratic Services	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(14,800.00)	(126,767.83)	(111,967.83)	Y
• Spend under budget from Members allowances (£0.112m)						
RSA054	Elections	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	592,330.00	603,106.60	10,776.60	G
• Minor variance to budget.						
RSA055	Legal Services	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(59,070.00)	676,107.19	735,177.19	R
• £0.350m savings not met in relation to MTFS • £0.233m spend above budget on Legal Childcare Cases (Demand Led) • £0.068 additional legal/court fee expenditure linked to increased number of cases • £0.051m Staff Capitalisation realised against transformation projects less than budgeted. • £0.043m under budget for Professional Fees income						

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA066	Policy and Governance	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(36,760.00)	(203,756.49)	(166,996.49)	Y
• Net vacancy management savings (£0.193m) • In-year pressures relating to supplies and services £0.036m						
RSA071	Resources Management Team	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	10,210.00	1,939,881.27	1,929,671.27	R
• £2.030m savings showing unachieved where budget is set against directorate, some of this is offset in service areas against savings in relation to service review implementation. • (£0.019m) one-off staff capitalisation through transformation projects. • (£0.030m) one-off reduction in spend against training across the directorate. • (£0.040m) income raised at year-end budgeted for in Finance & Technology.						
RSA072	Housing Benefits	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	511,630.00	1,151,283.96	639,653.96	R
• £0.640m net position across Housing Benefits due to unachieved saving relating to in-year HB subsidy loss. This position also includes £0.194m of Bad Debt Provision released during 24/25.						
RSA073	Scrutiny	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	83,720.00	232,042.19	148,322.19	R
• Vacancy management savings not achieved £0.100m and minor variance above staffing budget £0.048m.						
RSA074	Feedback and Insights	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(7,700.00)	(68,371.73)	(60,671.73)	Y
• Minor variance to budget						
Total A1R012: Resources			3,781,910.00	8,462,606.06	4,680,696.06	

Directorate			Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
A1R008	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT BOARD		(22,540.00)	295,208.43	317,748.43	R
A1R008: Strategic Management Board		Portfolio Holder	Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY
RSA043	Communications	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	23,590.00	192,237.14	168,647.14	R
- Capitalisation of staff costs (£0.105m) £0.376m savings not achieved in relation to rightsizing and historic income savings targets offset partially by vacancy management (£0.141m)						
RSA056	Chief Executive & PAs	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	8,100.00	102,674.41	94,574.41	A
Minor variance to budget						
RSA059	Commercial Services Business Development	Housing and Assets	(46,880.00)	(21,252.60)	25,627.40	G
Minor variance to budget						
RSA067	Programme Management	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	157,770.00	348,110.92	190,340.92	R
£0.190m spend relating to Transformation that is not able to be capitalised						
RSA076	Customer Services	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	(165,120.00)	(326,561.44)	(161,441.44)	Y
- Unachieved savings of £0.334m £0.103m Lost SLA Income re changes to CCTV Service - Offset by vacancy management and the voluntary redundancy programme as a result of a service review (£0.455m) - Reduction in supplies and services across the area of (£0.135m)						
Total A1R008: Strategic Management Board			(22,540.00)	295,208.43	317,748.43	

APPENDIX 2

MOVEMENT IN PROJECTIONS BETWEEN P11 AND OUTTURN

Directorate	P11 Controllable Variance £'000	Outturn Controllable Variance £'000	Movement £'000	Key Reasons for Movement
Health & Wellbeing	(250)	(489)	(238)	• £0.071m Planning services underachieved forecast income (though exceeded budget) • (£0.008m) Libraries favourable movement • (£0.026m) Business Intelligence favourable movement • (£0.132m) Regulatory services improvement through additional income • (£0.143m) Business & Consumer Protection improvement through additional income
People	16,100	31,244	15,144	ADULTS: • Purchasing additional spend £14.735m The variances above include the following identified pressures across all areas: - Transfer of clients from health to local authority funded - Several disputed cases relating to CHC income not yet resolved. - Increase in people in placements due to capital reductions from self-funders. - Supported Living transfers leading to increased provider costs and backdated costs. - Increase in complexity of cases. - Market Pressures - providers costs increased and backdated costs. - Winter Pressures - increase in demand over the winter months. The key elements of the purchasing spend are: -£5.851m Individual Service Funds (ISFs) transfers from Health to local authority -£3.537m Residential Care, £0.361m Nursing Care -£2.058m Supported Living increased complexity of cases and market pressures -£2.630m CHC Income shortfall -£0.315m Reablement expenditure -£0.101m increase in Direct Payments -(£0.121m) increased client contributions CHILDRENS: • £1.385m relates to a shortfall in contributions from other partners towards joint funded social care led placements. • £0.342m relates to an increase in spend on External Residential placements expenditure • £0.123m relates to an increase in DCT Prevention and Support payments • £0.063m relates to an increase in spend on 16-18 Supported Accommodation and allowances • £0.037m relates to an increase in spend on All-in-Programme Short Breaks within the DCT budget area • £0.030m relates to less grant and reserves funding applied within the Children-Looked-After UASC and Pathways Team • (£0.075m) relates to an increase in spend under budget against External Fostering placements • (£0.117m) relates to the use of Household Support Fund to fund a portion of accommodation and allowances expenditure within Leaving Care • (£0.304m) increase in spend under budget on Early Help non-staffing budgets including the increased use of

				Supporting Families Grant. £0.225m of this resulted from the use of capital to fund Parenting Assessment Team, freeing up an additional £0.225m of the Supporting Families Grant reserve to be used in Early Help Family Hubs instead • (£0.618m) relates to the use of capital to fund £0.618m revenue expenditure relating to one of the Council's new children's homes • £0.354m relates to an increase in spend over budget reported against Home to School Transport and £0.300m of this relates to funding contributions towards SEND Transport • (£0.147m) relating to maximising the use of grants to fund staff within Children-Looked-After Education (Virtual School) • (£0.190m) relates to an increase in spend under budget on statutory Concession Fares within Public Transport • (£0.374m) increase in spend under budget within Public Transport resulting from the use of Department for Transport Grants to support Bus Operators • (£0.110m) relates to an increase in in-year surplus relating to Shire Catering
Place	15,289	15,070	(219)	Growth & Infrastructure: • £0.865m shortfall of Highways staff capitalisation • £0.534m increase in Kier overhead apportionment (Revenue to Capital) • £0.163m shortfall on Permanent repair Gang capitalisation • £0.093m Corporate landlord Cost of disposal • £0.049m Kier Incentive payments • (£0.360m) Increase in rental income in relation to the Shopping Centre • (£0.168m) Shirehall backdated rent and Service Charges • (£0.171m) additional Housing Benefit and Student Accommodation rental income • (£0.060m) Staff savings recharge for management of Shopping Centres Homes & Communities: • (0.531m) Additional Waste contract savings (Energy Share) • (0.356m) Contract Savings & low-level efficiencies achieved across Housing • (0.293m) Additional one-off from government relating refugee resettlement.
Resources	5,136	4,681	(456)	• (£0.115m) additional capitalisation of staff working on transformation projects • (£0.121m) additional income generated via postages • (£0.226m) Additional income generated in IT • £0.039m Other minor variances across all areas
Strategic Management Board	560	318	(243)	• (£0.113m) additional capitalisation of staff working on transformation projects • (£0.083m) additional unbudgeted income, and reduction in final spend on supplies and services
Corporate Budgets	(2,947)	(16,595)	(13,647)	• (£10.059m) planned release of Finance Strategy Reserve and additional release of Development Reserve. • £1.741m provision for known redundancy costs committed to in 2024/25 but to be incurred in 2025/26 • (£0.428m) additional Levy Accounts Surplus distribution from government • (£1.064m) equipment budgets not committed during 2024/25 • (£1.923m) additional income through Treasury Management Activities including interest earned on loans provided to Cornovii during the year • (£1.940m) additional Section 31 grant for Business Rate Retention
Total	33,889	34,230	341	

APPENDIX 3

UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF 2024/25 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Summary

The savings delivered for 2024/25 are detailed in the table below:

Directorate	Delivered £'000	Savings not delivered £'000	Total £'000
Health & Wellbeing	1,959	0	1,959
People	27,141	11,777	38,918
Place	12,698	18,822	31,520
Resources	4,153	6,147	10,300
Strategic Management Board	554	1,798	2,352
Corporate Budgets	689	4,268	4,957
Total	47,194	42,812	90,006

*Note: the People directorate overachieved some individual savings targets in 24/25, some of this delivery has been one-off during the year and as a result will be a target rolled over into 24/25 to achieve on an ongoing basis. More detail is provided below.

Detail of the savings not delivered are provided below. Some of the savings have been partially achieved in future years, and so details of those savings to be carried forward for delivery in 2025/26 are detailed for information:

Savings Reference and Description	Savings not delivered in 24/25 £'000	Savings to be delivered in 25/26 £'000	Comments
Health & Wellbeing	0	152	
Savings of £0.152m were delivered as one-off savings in 24/25 but will be fully delivered in 25/26 through VRs. These are as follows:			
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing	0	132	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	0	20	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
People	11,777	14,596	
EFF09 – Removal of budgets for vacant posts	459	1,248	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF101 – Staff Budget turnover by 5%	2,277	2,277	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF105 – Getting Leadership Right	373	373	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC016 – Agency staff	85	85	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing	2,708	2,771	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC081 – Senior Management Review	207	0	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC085 – Reduce Third Party Spend	213	121	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	6,693	6,622	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
Overachievement against other savings targets within People	(1,238)	(363)	Ongoing overachievement that can be carried forward to offset other savings

Savings Reference and Description	Savings not delivered in 24/25 £'000	Savings to be delivered in 25/26 £'000	Comments
Savings have been delivered as one-off savings in 24/25 and will therefore need to be delivered in 25/26. These are as follows:			
MD012 – Supported living	0	873	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC007 – Review of in house day service provision	0	12	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC083 – Cost reductions in the pooled training budget	0	17	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
TO002 – Use of Shared Prosperity Fund	0	60	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
TO004 – Funding arrangements and contributions from external sources to higher cost placement	0	500	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
Place	18,822	14,831	
CM007 – Increase wider fees and charges	1,802	1,802	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF101 - Staff Budget turnover by 5%	150	100	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF105 – Getting Leadership Right	227	307	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF44a – Sale of energy and recyclates	500	0	Delivered in 25/26
EFF44b – Renegotiate Waste PFI contract	2,000	0	Delivered in 25/26
EFF44c – Reduce Household Recycling Centres	216	0	Delivered in 25/26
EFF45 – Charge staffing costs to capital	455	1,832	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF49 – Removal of budgets for vacant posts	814	896	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
MD006 – Booking system for household recycling centre	130	0	Delivered in 25/26
NI010 – Charge for green waste collection	2,500	0	Delivered in 25/26
NI013 – Car Parking charges at council offices	100	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC040 – Dispose of Shirehall quicker	195	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing	2,853	2,799	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC081 – Senior Management Review	139	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC085 – Reduce Third Party Spend	1,049	1,045	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	3,193	3,050	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
SC013 – Rationalise property and buildings	2,500	3,000	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
Resources	6,147	7,174	
CM007 – Increase wider fees and charges	144	50	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF101 - Staff Budget turnover by 5%	47	915	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF105 – Getting Leadership Right	532	540	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF80 – Removal of budget for vacant posts	15	563	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF81 – Charge staffing costs to capital	243	645	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF82 – Legal & Governance restructure	67	166	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery

Savings Reference and Description	Savings not delivered in 24/25 £'000	Saving to be delivered in 25/26 £'000	Comments
EFF83 – Charge staffing costs to capital	57	57	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF84 – Charge staffing costs to capital	0	21	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF86 – Contract rebates and spending reductions	28	28	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF87 – Digital County	100	100	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF88 – Review of single person discount and housing benefit applications against data warehouse	100	0	Delivered in 25/26
NI007 – Increased income from enhanced memorial and ceremony offer	60	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC064 – Review and resize HR/OD team (1)	20	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC065 – Review and resize HR/OD team (2)	95	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC068 – Review and resize staffing in the Overview and Scrutiny function	100	97	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC072 – Review and resize staffing in ICT	2	124	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC073 – Review and resize staffing in Revenues and Benefits	195	306	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC074 – cost reductions in Revenue & Benefits arising from Temporary Accommodation provision	525	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC077 – Centralisation of external legal spend	100	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing	1,884	1,892	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC081 – Senior Management Review	142	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC085 – Reduce Third Party Spend	3	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	1,636	1,670	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
SC010 – Service efficiencies and increased income from Registrars	50	0	Delivered in 25/26
Strategic Management Board	1,798	1,758	
CM007 – Increase wider fees and charges	10	4	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF105 – Getting Leadership Right	48	48	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF78 – Review of customer contact teams across the Council	1,025	1,025	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF80 – Removal of budget for vacant posts	0	109	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
EFF89 – CCTV provision and management	75	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC078 – Out of hours call triage and Shrewsbury Town CCTV	165	47	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing	290	371	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC081 – Senior Management Review	39	0	Delivered in 25/26
RC082 – Review and resize staffing in executive support	25	32	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	122	122	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
Corporate Budgets	4,268	2,670	
EFF103a – Transformation partner delivers 4 end to end process reviews	771	0	Delivered in 25/26

Savings Reference and Description	Savings not delivered in 24/25 £'000	Saving to be delivered in 25/26 £'000	Comments
EFF103b - Transformation partner delivers 4 end to end process reviews	1,229	0	Delivered in 25/26
EFF107 – Contract spend analysis	250	0	Delivered in 25/26
EFF108 – Application of corporate grants	1,349	2,000	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC080 – Review and resize overall council staffing		1	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
RC086 – Efficiency Savings across all areas of the Council	669	669	Carried forward to 2025/26 for delivery
Total	42,812	41,181	

APPENDIX 4

RECONCILIATION OF OUTTURN POSITION TO SAVINGS DELIVERY AND PRESSURES IDENTIFIED

Service Area	Outturn Variance (Controllable) £'000	Savings Pressure in 2024/25 £'000	Ongoing Monitoring Pressure Identified £'000	Ongoing Monitoring Savings Identified £'000	One Off Monitoring Pressures Identified £'000	One Off Monitoring Savings Identified £'000
Health and Wellbeing						
Integration & Healthy People – Non-Ringfenced	(489)	0	80	(178)	1,497	(1,888)
Integration & Healthy People – Ringfenced	0	0	0	0	673	(673)
Health & Wellbeing Total	(489)	0	80	(178)	2,171	(2,561)
People						
Adult Social Care	16,522	3,944	14,240	0	1,590	(3,252)
Children's & Families	9,339	1,338	8,663	0	5,668	(6,330)
Education & Achievement	1,631	0	3,688	0	446	(2,502)
Shire Services	(217)	0	0	0	0	(217)
Directorate management	3,969	3,978	0	0	115	(124)
People Total	31,245	9,260	26,591	0	7,819	(12,426)
Place						
Growth & Infrastructure	10,864	8,783	1,561	(122)	2,057	(1,416)
Homes and Communities	4,049	4,962	2,992	(165)	884	(4,624)
Directorate Management	157	57	0	0	100	0
Place Total	15,070	13,802	4,553	(287)	3,041	(6,040)
Resources						
Finance and Technology	1,302	4,565	0	0	248	(3,510)
Workforce and Improvement	899	1,095	0	0	218	(414)
Legal and Governance	529	357	394	0	278	(501)
Pensions	21	0	0	0	21	0
Directorate Management	1,930	2,030	0	0	0	(100)
Resources Total	4,681	8,047	394	0	765	(4,525)
Strategic Management Board						
Chief Executive and PAs	95	166	0	0	0	(71)
Programme Management	216	0	214	0	26	(24)
Communications and Customer Services	7	977	0	0	13	(983)
Strategic Management Board Total	318	1,143	214	0	39	(1,078)
Corporate Budgets	(16,595)	10,560	0	0	282	(27,437)
Council Total	34,230	42,812	31,832	(465)	14,117	(54,066)

APPENDIX 5

AMENDMENTS TO ORIGINAL BUDGET 2024/25

	Total £'000	Health & Wellbeing £'000	People £'000	Place £'000	Resources £'000	Strategic Management Board £'000	Corporate Budgets £'000
Original Budget as Agreed by Council	261,697	349	208,153	65,209	3,882	186	(16,082)
Quarter 1							
Structure Changes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virements	0	0	150	(150)	0	0	0
Quarter 2							
Structure Changes	0	6,540	10,901	(18,013)	36	536	0
Virements	0	503	(735)	191	229	(187)	(1)
Quarter 3							
Structure Changes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virements	0	(208)	(826)	(311)	(329)	(69)	1,743
Quarter 4							
Structure Changes:							
Louise House	0	0	(34)	34	0	0	0
Reception							
Welfare & Reform	0	0	0	366	0	(366)	0
Commercial Service	0	0	0	37	0	(37)	0
Business Development							
Virements:							
Corporate Landlord	0	0	(68)	68	0	0	0
Budgets created for new Children's homes							
Correcting previous pay award adjustments	0	30	18	3	0	1	(52)
Revised Budget	261,697	7,214	217,559	47,434	3,818	64	(14,392)

APPENDIX 6

GENERAL FUND BALANCE

- 6.1 The General Fund reserve at 31st March 2024 stood at £8.237m, below the target level which is £15m-£30m as a minimum. The 2024/25 budget strategy included a contribution of £30.584m to the General Fund balance which would then reach £38.821m.
- 6.2 It is essential that the Council retains the General Fund Balance to be able to mitigate any unforeseen shocks (such as ongoing inflationary increases, climate events such as flooding and drought, or rapid reductions in available resources due to changed national policy). Independent advice is that General Fund un-earmarked reserves should equate to 5%- 10% of net spending.
- 6.3 The outturn of £34.230m has been identified during the year as a cost pressure against the General Fund.
- 6.4 In 2019/20 – 2023/24, the General Fund was used to offset Shire Services' deficit outturn position, as the Shire Services' earmarked reserve had been fully utilised in 2019/20. This use of the General Fund effectively represents a loan to Shire Services which must be repaid. Shire Services have delivered a surplus in 2024/25 of £0.217m, which can now be used to repay an element of the General Fund contribution. Therefore, the total loan now stands at £1.244m, and it is still intended that this will be repaid within a reasonable time frame.

General Fund	£'000
Balance at 1 st April 2024	8,237
Budgeted Contribution to GF	30,584
Budgeted General Fund Balance at 31 March	38,821
Controllable Overspend*	(34,230)
Non controllable insurance underspend	232
Balance at 31 March 2025	4,823

* The unfunded deficit for Shire Services referred to in para. 6.4 is included within the controllable overspend of £34.230m.

APPENDIX 7

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2024/25

As at 31 March 2025	Budget £	Outturn £	Variance Adverse/ (Favourable) £
Income			
Dwellings Rent	(21,534,116)	(21,525,323)	8,792
Garage Rent	(102,561)	(99,371)	3,189
Other Rent	(32,388)	(30,674)	1,714
Charges for Services	(918,309)	(1,424,648)	(506,339)
Total Income	(22,587,373)	(23,080,017)	(492,644)
Expenditure			
ALMO Management Fee	10,407,223	10,513,244	106,020
Supplies and Services	900,813	1,701,153	800,341
Capital Charges – Dwelling Depreciation	4,771,293	4,190,140	(581,153)
Capital Charges – Depreciation Other	279,202	243,990	(35,212)
Repairs charged to revenue	635,000	634,473	(527)
New Development Feasibility	266,750	109,956	(156,794)
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	106,391	50,000	(56,391)
Corporate & Democratic Core	389,716	451,310	61,594
Total Expenditure	17,756,388	17,894,266	137,878
Net Cost of Services	(4,830,985)	(5,185,751)	(354,766)
Loan repayments	3,600	0	(3,600)
Interest Paid	3,239,903	3,455,326	215,423
Interest Received	(218,772)	(1,393,552)	(1,174,780)
Net Operating (Income)/Expenditure	(1,806,254)	(3,123,977)	(1,317,723)
Net Cost of Service/(Surplus) for Year	(1,806,254)	(3,123,977)	(1,317,723)
HRA Reserve			
Brought forward 1 April	(11,736,616)	(11,736,616)	0
(Surplus)/Deficit for year	(1,806,254)	(3,123,977)	(1,317,723)
Carried Forward 31 March	(13,542,870)	(14,860,593)	(1,317,723)

APPENDIX 8

EARMARKED RESERVES

8.1 The change in revenue reserves and provisions are detailed on the table below and shows a reduction in the overall reserves and provisions held.

Movement in Reserves and Provisions 2024/25

	Reserves £'000	Provisions £'000	Bad Debt Provisions £'000	Total Reserves and Provisions £'000
As at 31 March 2024	35,407	8,955	22,077	66,439
As at 31 March 2025	25,455	11,226	22,032	58,713
Increase/(Decrease)	(9,952)	2,271	(45)	(7,726)
Delegated School Balances Movement	(647)	0	0	(647)
Increase/(Decrease) (excluding Delegated Schools Balances)	(9,305)	2,271	(45)	(7,079)

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions:

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2024/25 (£'000)	Income in 2024/25 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
Reserves					
Sums set aside for major schemes, such as capital developments, or to fund major reorganisation					
Redundancy	Required to meet one-off costs arising from approved staffing reductions, allowing the full approved savings in salaries or wages to reach the revenue account.	2,000	-2,210	210	0
Revenue commitments for future capital expenditure	Comprises of underspends against budgeted revenue contributions available for capital schemes. The underspends have arisen due to slippage in capital schemes or because other funding streams were utilised during the year so as to maximise time limited grants.	3,199	-324	335	3,210
Development reserve	Required to fund development projects or training that will deliver efficiency savings.	5,696	-10,493	6,000	1,204
Invest to save reserve	Required to fund invest to save projects in order to deliver the service transformation programme.	1,379	-888	0	491
		12,274	-13,914	6,544	4,904
Insurance reserves					
Fire liability	Required to meet the cost of excesses on all council properties.	1,051	-385	173	838
Motor insurance	An internally operated self-insurance reserve to meet costs not covered by the council's motor insurance policy.	533	-28	106	611

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2024/25 (£'000)	Income in 2024/25 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
		1,584	-414	280	1,450
Reserves of trading and business units					
Shire catering and cleaning efficiency	Built up from trading surpluses to invest in new initiatives, to meet exceptional unbudgeted costs or cover any trading deficits.	0	-2	2	0
		0	-2	2	0
Reserves retained for service departmental use					
Building control	Required to manage the position regarding building control charges.	311	-37	0	274
Care act & IBCF reserve	Required to fund the costs of implementing the care act requirements within the council. This will be committed to the costs of one off posts required to implement the changes and training costs for staff within adult services. Plus unspent IBCF monies required to fund the IBCF programme in future years.	1,022	-943	0	79
Economic development workshops major maintenance	Established to meet the costs of major maintenance of economic development workshops.	149	0	0	149
External fund reserve	Reserves held where the council is the administering body for trust funds or partnership working.	2,125	-495	94	1,723
Financial strategy reserve	Established specifically to provide one off funding for savings proposals in the financial strategy	0	-4,250	4,250	0
Highways development & innovation fund	Set aside funds for pump priming the development and innovation programme.	600	-500	0	100
New homes bonus	Established from unapplied new homes bonus grant balances.	834	-187	0	647
Public health reserve	This reserve includes balances committed to specific public health projects.	3,220	-843	741	3,118
Repairs & maintenance reserve	Set aside for known repairs and maintenance required to council owned properties.	246	-33	0	214
Resources efficiency	Established for investment in new developments, particularly information technology, that service area would not be expected to meet from their internal service level agreements for support services.	495	-89	188	593
Revenue commitments from unringfenced revenue grants	Established from unapplied unringfenced grant balances. Commitments have been made against these balances in 2024/25	3,341	-1,644	2,215	3,911
Severe weather	Required to meet unbudgeted costs arising from the damage caused by severe weather. The policy of the council is to budget for an average year's expenditure in the revenue accounts and transfer any underspend to the reserve or fund any overspend from the reserve.	315	-315	0	0
TMO vehicle replacement	Set up to meet the costs of replacement vehicles by the integrated transport unit.	37	0	0	37

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2024/25 (£'000)	Income in 2024/25 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
		12,693	-9,336	7,487	10,844
School balances					
Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion.	7,340	-7,784	7,138	6,693
Schools building maintenance insurance	The schools building maintenance insurance scheme is a service provided by property services for schools. In return for an annual sum all structural repairs and maintenance responsibilities previously identified as the "authority's responsibility" are carried out at no additional charge to the school.	1,516	0	48	1,564
		8,856	-7,784	7,185	8,257
Total Reserves		35,407	-31,450	21,497	25,455
Provisions					
Accumulated absences account	Provision to cover potential future payments of employee benefits not taken as at the end of the year. This is required under IFRS accounting regulations.	2,545	3,213	-2,545	3,213
Other provisions - short term	Includes a number of small provisions including environmental maintenance contract commitments and shopping centre rental payments	161	1,741	-5	1,897
Other provisions - long term	Includes a number of small provisions including s106 accrued interest, profit share agreements and shopping centre rental payments.	73	0	-73	0
Tenancy deposit clawbacks	This represents deposits held for the economic development workshops that may be repaid at some point in the future.	243	29	-28	244
Liability insurance	Provision to meet the estimated actuarial valuation of claims for public liability and employers' liability	3,978	875	-885	3,968
NDR appeals	Represents the council's share of the provision held for successful appeals against business rates.	1,955	2,659	-2,711	1,904
Council tax bad debt	Held for potential write offs of council tax debtor balances.	12,352	634	-317	12,669
NDR bad debt	Held for potential write offs of NDR debtor balances.	2,477	131	3	2,610
General fund bad debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for general fund services including housing benefits.	6,862	1,082	-1,538	6,406
HRA bad debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for housing revenue account rents and other debtor balances.	386	50	-89	347
Other provisions - long term	Includes a number of small provisions including s106 accrued interest, profit share agreements and shopping centre rental payments.	73	0	-73	0
Total Provisions		31,032	10,414	-8,188	33,258
Total Reserves & Provisions		66,439	-21,036	13,309	58,712

Delegated School Balances

8.2 The movement in delegated schools' balances are detailed in the table below.

Movement in delegated school balances 2024/25

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	Increase/ (Decrease) £'000
Schools:			
- Revenue Balances	6,083	4,703	(1,380)
- Invested Balances	459	1,211	752
- Extended Schools Activities balance	797	779	(18)
Total Delegated School Balances	7,340	6,693	(646)

8.3 Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion. Of the 84 schools with balances, 9 have deficit balances.

8.4 The Extended Schools activities allocations for schools have decreased marginally during 2024/25. These balances are ringfenced to each individual school within School Balances.

8.5 In 2020, new reporting requirements were introduced to establish a new reserve for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances. For those local authorities with a DSG balance surplus, the requirement is that the surplus is held in an earmarked useable reserve, and any deficit is held in an unusable reserve named the DSG Adjustment Account. In 2023/24 the Council held a DSG deficit of £2.304m, and this has increased further to £17.651m.

APPENDIX 9

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 29/02/24	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved	Revised 2024/25 Capital Programme Quarter 4
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund				
Adult Services	-	1.736	0.138	1.873
Childrens Services	9.025	0.579	0.380	9.984
Place	79.126	1.193	2.025	82.345
Resources	0.100	-	-	0.100
Strategic Management Board	-	0.165	(0.030)	0.135
Total General Fund	88.251	3.673	2.513	94.437
Housing Revenue Account	29.253	(10.484)	(0.566)	18.202
Total Approved Budget	117.504	(6.811)	1.946	112.640

APPENDIX 10

CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN POSITION BY DIRECTORATE 2024/25

Detail	Revised Capital Programme - Outturn 2024/25 £m	Actual Expenditure 31/03/2025 £m	Variance £m	Spend To Budget %
General Fund				
Health & Wellbeing	1.873	2.234	(0.360)	-
People	9.984	6.754	3.230	67.6%
Place	82.345	81.20	1.147	98.6%
Resources	0.100	0.223	(0.123)	223.3%
Strategic Management Board	0.135			
Total General Fund	94.437	90.409	3.894	95.7%
Housing Revenue Account	18.202	17.353	0.849	95.3%
Total Approved Budget	112.640	107.761	4.743	95.7%

APPENDIX 11

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES BETWEEN REVISED OUTTURN BUDGET AND OUTTURN EXPENDITURE BY DIRECTORATE AND SERVICE AREAS FOR 2024/25

The overall capital programme, both General Fund and HRA, outturned at £107.820m expenditure against a budget profile of £112.640m for the 2024/25 financial year, a £74.819m underspend against expected profile or 97.5% expenditure against budget.

Health & Wellbeing - Total overspend against Health & Wellbeing capital programme was £0.360m against profile.

People - Total underspend against People capital programme was £3.230m against profile.

Education

Devolved Formula Capital/Energy Efficiency Grant - spend of £0.533m against budget £1.212m. Expenditure from this programme is controlled by schools. In general schools use this funding for a variety of small and medium projects and procuring IT equipment. As with other programmes funded through standards fund grant, the expenditure is not immediately reflected in capital accounts, and unspent balances can be carried forward to subsequent financial years. Underspend £0.679m rephased to 2025/26 programme.

Condition Funding - spend of £1.407m against budget of £2.377m. This fund is used to maintain school buildings through a prioritised planned delivery programme. Most works have to be scheduled during school closure periods and natural rephasing of schemes occurs in order to enable this. Underspend of £1.0m rephased to 2025/26 programme.

Warm Homes Fund - The project for this financial year was Phase 2 of the Home Upgrade Grant. The budget was £2.743m and the spend £3.866m. While this is an overspend of £1.123m this budget was allocated to 2025/26, and the work was completed quicker than expected as the grant is due to finish in July 2025. This is funded by grant from DESNZ and the final accounts on this project will be submitted shortly.

Place - Growth & Infrastructure

Highways Maintenance - Spend on highways infrastructure amounted to £23.2m for this programme of work which includes Highways, Structures, Lighting and Drainage. This has been funded from Government Grants of £9.155m Highway Maintenance Grant, £9.155m from the Government Pot Hole Fund, £2.289m Incentive Fund and £2.618m Network North Funding.

This service area outturned at £0.731m overspend. This was predominantly as a result of increased expenditure on Highway Capital repairs and will be financed from the 25/26 budget allocation. Over £10 million has supported a programme of proactive patching treatments across the county.

North-West Relief Road - Expenditure outturned above budget profile in 2024/25 by the sum of £1.933m resulting from costs incurred in finalising planning condition requirements and the final stages in production of the Final Business Case submission for the Department for Transport, but not above the overall budget delegation approved. This overspend has been re-profiled from the 2025/26 budget accordingly with no further major expenditure expected to be incurred until the outcome of the next phase of development is confirmed.

Flood Defence and Water Management - Outturn position overall £1.120m underspend against budget. Shropshire Council is acting as project lead on a number of Environment Agency funded Demonstrator Flood Prevention Projects and mitigations, including the Rea Brook project, Guilsfield Brook project and further innovation and technological intervention projects. This is grant funding that will be rephased into the 2025/26 programme for delivery.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points (OZEV) - The project to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the County is coming to its final stages of installation. This project which is part funded from OZEV Grant has now been extended into the 2025/26 financial year with the remaining budget of £0.5m being used for the final installation points.

Integrated Transport Grant - Outturn Position overall £1.570m underspend against budget. This is due to timing delivery of smaller schemes required to improve road safety and improvements across the County that have been delayed until the 2025/26 financial year.

S106 and CIL Highways Schemes - Outturn position £0.843m underspend against budget profile. Ensuring schemes are delivered to the correct mitigation required and that developer contribution funding is used as efficiently and effectively as possible has seen a delay in actual scheme delivery to the 2025/26 financial year on some projects. This budget has been carried forward into the 2025/26 financial year for scheme delivery.

The River Severn Partnership Advanced Wireless Region - The River Severn Partnership Advanced Wireless Innovation Region is a £4m initiative, wholly funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and managed by Shropshire Council on behalf of the River Severn Partnership. This scheme has now officially been extended into the 2025/26 financial year, with additional funding also being awarded to deliver the project. The underspend of funding from 2024/25 of £1.0m has been rolled into the 2025/26 financial year for delivery and finalisation of the scheme by September 2025.

Commercial Investment Programme: Biochar - The Pyrolysis project had a budget of £1.491m but only a spend of £0.302m due to legacy issues with the chosen site of Coder Road. Although the site was the most appropriate one from the three identified, there remained the tanks from the decommissioned Anaerobic digester which had been left with waste inside. The task of testing and surveying the tanks to arrange for a suitable removal along with delays in planning permission due to the unique nature of this project has caused an interruption in the timeline pushing the costs through to 2025/26.

Resources - Total overspend against Resources capital programme was £0.123m against profile.

Strategic Management Board - Total underspend against Strategic Management Board capital programme was £0.076m against profile.

Housing Revenue Account - Total underspend against the HRA programme was £0.849m.

Repairs Programme - During 2024/25 there was a total spend of £7.861m on capital related improvements to HRA properties against a budget of £7.193m, so an overspend against budget of £0.668m which has been financed from the Major Repairs Reserve Fund. Some major investment areas include works on Fire Safety Improvements £1.244m, roof replacement works £1.516m and upgrades to heating systems £0.842m.

APPENDIX 12

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCING 2024/25

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 29/02/24	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved	Revised 2024/25 Capital Programme Quarter 4
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Financing				
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	40.024	(17.466)	0.373	22.931
SALIX Loan	-	-	-	-
Government Grants	57.032	3.451	1.117	61.600
Other Grants	0.156	0.693	(0.054)	0.794
Other Contributions	5.461	11.020	1.416	17.897
Revenue Contributions to Capital	0.231	0.412	0.617	1.260
Major Repairs Allowance	4.828	4.653	(1.798)	7.683
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	9.772	(9.573)	0.276	0.475
Total Confirmed Funding	117.504	(6.811)	1.946	112.640

* Borrowing for which on-going revenue costs are financed by the Service, usually from revenue savings generated from the schemes.

APPENDIX 13

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 to 2027/28

Detail	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m
General Fund			
Health & Wellbeing	0.653	0.150	0.200
People	9.146	8.491	3.550
Place & Enterprise	121.878	44.065	34.462
Resources	0.000	-	-
Total General Fund	131.677	52.706	38.212
Housing Revenue Account	20.897	19.644	7.000
Total Approved Budget	152.574	72.350	45.212
Financing			
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	25.109	19.398	6.979
SALIX Loan	-	-	-
Government Grants	98.946	37.889	30.787
Other Grants	0.232	0.012	-
Other Contributions	8.915	1.141	1.419
Revenue Contributions to Capital	0.873	0.347	-
Major Repairs Allowance	5.560	5.000	5.000
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	12.940	8.564	1.027
Total Confirmed Funding	152.574	72.350	45.212

* Borrowing for which on-going revenue costs are financed by the Service, usually from revenue savings generated from the schemes.

APPENDIX 14

PROJECTED CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

The Council's capital programme is heavily reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance the capital programme. There is a high level of risk in these projections as they are subject to changes in property and land values, the actions of potential buyers and being granted planning permission on sites. A RAG analysis has been applied for capital receipts projected, based on the current likelihood of generating them by the end of each financial year. Those marked as green are highly likely to be completed by the end of the financial year, amber achievable but challenging and thus there is a risk of slippage, and red are highly unlikely to complete in year and thus there is a high risk of slippage. However, no receipts are guaranteed to complete in this financial year as there may be delays between exchanging contracts and completing.

The Council's requirement for capital receipts of £26.407m reported at Quarter 3 was primarily due to the need to fund the Council's transformational activities: the Voluntary Redundancy Programme, compulsory redundancies, specific transformation projects and the Council's Strategic Transformation Partner. In February 2025 the Council applied to the Government for a capitalisation direction, which has been approved in principle and creates the ability for the Council to borrow to fund its' transformational activities in 2024-25 and so protect capital receipts.

An amount of £26.900m was approved and of this a total of £26.823m has been utilised to fund transformational activities in 2024-25. This successful submission has significantly improved the Council's capital receipts position as shown in the table below.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	- 80,929,35	13,116,225	8,564,314	1,027,267
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	-	23,702,067	4,200,000	4,000,000
Transformation activities	26,823,219	13,574,595	-	-
Transformation activities funded with EFS Approval	- 26,823,219			
Total Commitments	- 80,929	50,392,887	12,764,314	5,027,267
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:				
Brought Forward in hand	15,175,259	24,432,326	- 7,341,820	- 20,041,134
Generated 2024/25 YTD	9,176,138	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	-	18,618,741	65,000	65,000
Total in hand/projected	24,351,397	43,051,067	- 7,276,820	- 19,976,134
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	- 24,432,326	7,341,820	20,041,134	25,003,401
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	-	40,061,130	12,550,750	8,931,170

Capital receipts of £9.176m were realised in year, resulting in an in-year capital receipts surplus of £9.257m and a cumulative capital receipts surplus of £24.432m in hand as at 31/03/2025. These receipts will be set-aside, enabling the Council to achieve an additional MRP saving of £0.222m in 2025/26. These capital receipts are required to finance schemes they are allocated to in the future years' capital programme.

Based on the current approved position, across the life of the programme there are significant shortfalls in capital receipt projections of £7.342m, £20.041m and £25.003m in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively based on receipts rated

green in the RAG analysis to fund the required budget in the capital programme, further transformation programme commitments and the ongoing Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Programme initiated to achieve significant revenue budget savings. There is, therefore, the requirement to progress the disposals currently rated amber and red to ensure they are realised, together with realising the revenue running cost savings from some of the properties. Considerable work is required to realise these receipts, with generally a lead in time of at least 12 to 18 months on larger disposals. In addition to the current expenditure commitments, the programme will also grow as new schemes are approved. Officers are continuing to explore the potential to accelerate the realisation of capital receipts and to identify additional opportunities to achieve further capital receipts.

It is important that work progresses, to avoid funding shortfalls in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 and minimise any shortfall in future years. Failure to generate the required level of capital receipts will result in the need to further reduce or re-profile the capital programme, some of which will occur naturally as part of the review of the delivery of schemes; or undertake prudential borrowing, which will incur future year's revenue costs that are not budgeted in the revenue financial strategy.

The projected shortfall in capital receipts is purely based on the currently approved capital programme for the period 2025-26 to 2027-28. The current Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2028-29, approved by Council in February 2024, identifies potential future priority capital schemes with estimated costs of £19.350m.

APPENDIX 15

Shropshire Council - Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2027/28
Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2024/25

Directorate	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 2024/25 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	2025/26 Revised Budget £	2026/27 Revised Budget £	2027/28 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Health & Wellbeing	1,735,974	137,523	1,873,497	2,233,739	-360,242	119.23%	1,873,497	653,036	150,000	200,346
People	9,604,306	379,869	9,984,175	6,754,166	3,230,009	67.65%	9,984,175	9,145,509	8,491,035	3,550,000
Place	80,319,443	2,025,308	82,344,751	81,197,399	1,147,352	98.61%	82,344,751	121,878,235	44,064,781	34,461,964
Resources	100,000	0	100,000	223,313	-123,313	223.31%	100,000	0	0	0
Strategic Management Board	165,000	(30,000)	135,000	58,971	76,029	43.68%	135,000	0	0	0
Total General Fund	91,924,723	2,512,700	94,437,423	90,467,588	3,969,835	95.80%	94,437,423	131,676,780	52,705,816	38,212,310
Housing Revenue Account	18,768,515	-566,432	18,202,083	17,352,777	849,306	95.33%	18,202,083	20,897,416	19,644,363	7,000,000
Total Approved Budget	110,693,238	1,946,268	112,639,506	107,820,365	4,819,141	95.72%	112,639,506	152,574,196	72,350,179	45,212,310

Shropshire Council - Capital Programme Budget Outturn Report 2024/25

Directorate Service Area	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 2024/25 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	2025/26 Revised Budget £	2026/27 Revised Budget £	2027/28 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Health & Wellbeing	1,735,974	137,523	1,873,497	2,233,739	-360,242	119.23%	1,873,497	653,036	150,000	200,346
Public Health Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Regulatory Services Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Planning Policy Capital	1,180,669	100,000	1,280,669	1,857,542	-576,873	145.04%	1,280,669	471,486	150,000	200,346
Development Management Capital	167,794	126,853	294,647	216,156	78,491	73.36%	294,647	40,500	0	0
Libraries Capital	387,511	-89,330	298,181	160,041	138,140	53.67%	298,181	141,050	0	0
People	9,604,306	379,869	9,984,175	6,754,166	3,230,009	67.65%	9,984,175	9,145,509	8,491,035	3,550,000
Adult Social Care Contracts & Provider Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care Operations Capital	539,715	0	539,715	275,435	264,280	51.03%	539,715	150,000	0	0
Children's Residential Care Capital	169,426	0	169,426	58,999	110,427	34.82%	169,426	130,000	0	0
Non Maintained Schools Capital	3,322,078	143,539	3,465,617	2,986,234	479,383	86.17%	3,465,617	758,680	0	0
Primary School Capital	3,457,660	24,287	3,481,947	2,542,029	939,918	73.01%	3,481,947	1,722,224	800,000	0
Secondary School Capital	68,538	0	68,538	67,757	781	98.86%	68,538	0	0	0
Special Schools Capital	131	0	131	131	0	99.88%	131	0	0	0
Unallocated School Capital	324,722	-102,459	222,263	0	222,263	0.00%	222,263	6,314,121	7,679,287	3,550,000
Primary School Managed Capital	1,657,885	-10,441	1,647,444	515,139	1,132,305	31.27%	1,647,444	0	0	0
Secondary School Managed Capital	52,971	0	52,971	7,561	45,410	14.27%	52,971	0	0	0
Special Schools Managed Capital	11,180	0	11,180	11,180	0	100.00%	11,180	0	0	0
Shropshire Music Service Capital	0	35,243	35,243	0	35,243	0.00%	35,243	70,484	11,748	0
Environment and Transport (Public Transport) Capital	0	289,700	289,700	289,700	0	100.00%	289,700	0	0	0
Place Capital - Growth & Infrastructure	59,611,581	-146,313	59,465,268	54,381,229	5,084,039	91.45%	59,465,268	111,094,840	37,884,503	27,636,964
Property & Asset Capital	12,827,225	55,555	12,882,780	10,199,182	2,683,598	79.17%	12,882,780	21,067,384	7,800,000	3,979,479
Broadband Capital	4,519,432	6,510	4,525,942	3,283,505	1,242,437	72.55%	4,525,942	2,162,045	1,500,000	1,420,485
Growth & Development Capital	6,174,322	-63,171	6,111,151	6,912,494	-801,343	113.11%	6,111,151	6,840,112	5,000,000	0
Highways Capital	36,090,602	-145,207	35,945,395	33,986,048	1,959,347	94.55%	35,945,395	81,025,299	23,584,503	22,237,000
Environment & Transport Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Place Capital - Homes & Communities	20,707,862	2,171,621	22,879,483	26,816,170	-3,936,687	117.21%	22,879,483	10,783,395	6,180,278	6,825,000
Leisure Capital	7,384,640	1,500,000	8,884,640	10,910,262	-2,025,622	122.80%	8,884,640	3,547,303	633,261	0
National Landscapes and Outdoor Partnerships Capital	1,598,883	6,899	1,605,782	1,193,027	412,755	74.30%	1,605,782	285,018	0	0
Visitor Economy Capital	115,862	-7,421	108,441	110,244	-1,803	101.66%	108,441	0	0	0
Housing Services Capital	11,519,557	649,030	12,168,587	14,490,604	-2,322,017	119.08%	12,168,587	6,951,074	5,547,017	6,500,000
Waste Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	325,000
Theatre Services Capital	88,920	23,113	112,033	112,033	0	100.00%	112,033	0	0	0
Resources	100,000	0	100,000	223,313	-123,313	223.31%	100,000	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - CRM Capital	100,000	51,250	151,250	172,063	-20,813	113.76%	151,250	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - ERP Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Infrastructure & Architecture Capital	0	-51,250	-51,250	2,500	-53,750	-4.88%	-51,250	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Social Care Capital	0	0	0	48,750	-48,750	0.00%	0	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Unallocated Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Strategic Management Board	165,000	-30,000	135,000	58,971	76,029	43.68%	135,000	0	0	0
Communications & Engagement Capital	165,000	-30,000	135,000	58,971	76,029	43.68%	135,000	0	0	0
Total General Fund	91,924,723	2,512,700	94,437,423	90,467,588	3,969,835	95.80%	94,437,423	131,676,780	52,705,816	38,212,310
Housing Revenue Account	18,768,515	-566,432	18,202,083	17,352,777	849,306	95.33%	18,202,083	20,897,416	19,644,363	7,000,000
HRA Dwellings Capital	18,768,515	-566,432	18,202,083	17,352,777	849,306	95.33%	18,202,083	20,897,416	19,644,363	7,000,000
Total Approved Budget	110,693,238	1,946,268	112,639,506	107,820,365	4,819,141	95.72%	112,639,506	152,574,196	72,350,179	45,212,310

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Committee and Date

Cabinet
9th July 2025

Audit Committee
16th July 2025

Council
17th July 2025

Item

Public



Annual Treasury Report 2024/25

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258951
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder - Finance		

1. Synopsis

During 2024/25 the Council achieved all required targets for managing its financing arrangements, including day to day cashflow, short term investments and longer-term borrowings. Investment income of £1.956m was secured.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. During 2024/25, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparison to the target set in the Treasury Strategy, are detailed in Appendix C.
- 2.2. The returns on investment were marginally short of the benchmark (-0.03%), achieving a return of 4.87%. This was partly due to the need to borrow short term cash for cash flow purposes during the year from other authorities. Also, as cash balances held are lower than in previous years, the Council needs to ensure cash balances are highly liquid, resulting in lower interest rates on short term deals. Whilst returns on investment are important, as we strive to achieve the best investment we can, the Council's priority is always to ensure security of funds and ensure we hold sufficient liquid balances. This will often mean that we cannot secure the higher rate investments as these are offered to longer term deals.
- 2.3. Treasury activities during the year have been within approved prudential and treasury indicators set and have complied with the Treasury Strategy.

3. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- 3.1. Approve the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.
- 3.2. Note the annual treasury management report for 2024/25

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance together with the rigorous internal controls will enable the Council to manage the risk associated with Treasury Management activities and the potential for financial loss.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands as budgeted for within the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 27 February 2025 and subsequent updates. It is also addressed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has and continues to be undertaken to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve
 - scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope,
 - delaying implementation, or
 - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2. The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing because of capital receipt generation or delays in delivery of the capital programme will both have a positive impact of the council's cash position. Similarly, higher than benchmarked returns on available cash will also help the Council's financial position. For monitoring purposes, assumptions are made early in year about borrowing and returns based on the strategies agreed by Council in the preceding February. Performance outside of these assumptions results in increased or reduced income for the Council.
- 5.3. The 2024/25 performance is marginally below the benchmark for the reasons outlined in paragraph 2.2 of this report and has delivered income of £1.956 million which has been reflected in the Financial Outturn report for 2024/25.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Treasury Team is working with the Council to achieve this. There are no climate change impacts arising from this report. Shropshire Council's investment portfolio has no level 1, 2 or 3 emissions. It comprises of straightforward cash deposits with financial institutions and other Local Authorities.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2024/25. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).
- 7.2. During 2024/25 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:
- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year
 - a mid-year treasury update report
 - an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy, (this report)
- 7.3. In addition, Cabinet has received quarterly treasury management update reports during the year.
- 7.4. The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.
- 7.5. The Council has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by Cabinet before they were reported to the full Council.
- 7.6. The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the finance team to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting detailed in the summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices. Assurance on liquidity is taken from detailed cashflow planning which is amended day by day and reviewed to identify issues and address them. Cash flow plans extend out 24 months. Day to day cash flow plans inform short term investment and borrowing planning, as well as supporting the planning for longer term investments and borrowings.

8. Borrowing Strategy and Outturn for 2024/25

- 8.1. The Council's Borrowing Strategy and Outturn position for 2024/25 can be found in Appendix A.

9. Investment Strategy and Outturn for 2024/25

- 9.1. The Council's Investment Strategy and Outturn position for 2024/25 can be found in Appendix B.

10. Compliance with Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators

- 10.1. Compliance with the Council's Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators can be found in Appendix C.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Treasury Strategy 2024/25 – Council, 29 February 2024

Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2024/25 – Cabinet, 11 September 2024

Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2024/25 – Cabinet, 4 December 2024

Treasury Strategy 2024/25 Mid-Year Review – Cabinet, 4th December 2024

Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2024/25 – Cabinet, 12 February 2025

Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2024/25 – Cabinet, 11 June 2025

Local Member: All

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix A - Borrowing Strategy and Outturn 2024/25

Appendix B - Investment Strategy and Outturn 2024/25

Appendix C – Prudential Indicators 2024/25

APPENDIX A - BORROWING STRATEGY AND OUTTURN 2024/25

Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25

During 2024/25, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as although near-term investment rates were equal to, and sometimes higher than, long-term borrowing costs, the latter are expected to fall back through 2025 and 2026 in the light of economic growth concerns and the eventual dampening of inflation. The Authority has sought to minimise the taking on of long-term borrowing at elevated levels (>5%) and has focused on a policy of internal and temporary borrowing, supplemented by short-dated borrowing (<5 years) as appropriate.

The Council's borrowing requirement identified within the capital programme 2024/25 to 2026/27 was self-financing prudential borrowing of £68.7m and the need to borrow externally was considered against the Council's current under borrowed position and the level of cash balances held within the authority.

The Council had not undertaken any new borrowing for a number of years, and has been utilising cash balances to internally "borrow" for prudential borrowing schemes. This has enabled the Council to benefit from saving on interest costs compared to the returns that could be generated on the cash balances. This approach has been effective during a period where the Council has held significant cash balances.

Cash balances have now reduced as a result of reduced levels of reserves being held and loans continuing to reach their maturity dates. Therefore it has been necessary to secure additional borrowing to reduce the under-borrowed position.

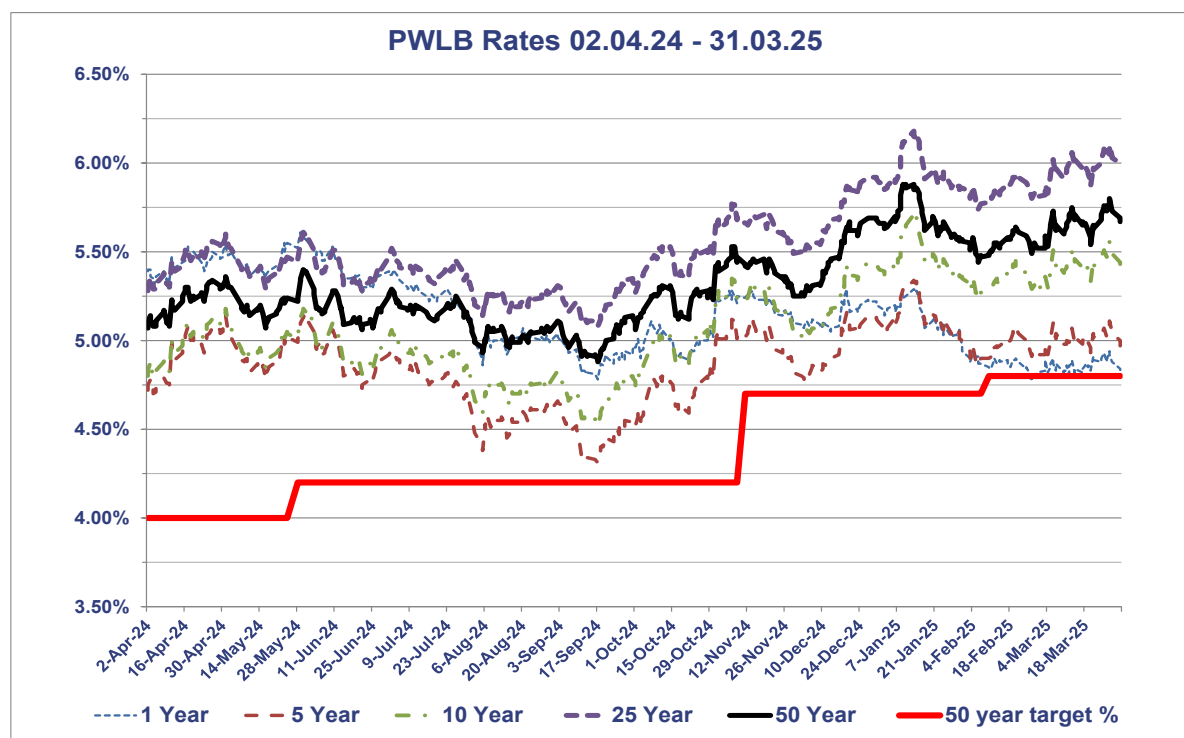
Interest rate forecasts initially suggested gradual reductions in short, medium and longer-term fixed borrowing rates during 2024/25. Bank Rate did peak at 5.25% as anticipated, but the initial expectation of significant rate reductions did not transpire, primarily because inflation concerns remained elevated. Forecasts were too optimistic from a rate reduction perspective, but more recently the forecasts, updated from November 2024 onwards, look more realistic.

At the start of April 2025, following the introduction of President Trump's trade tariffs policies, the market now expects Bank Rate to fall to 3.75% by the end of December 2025, pulling down the 5- and 10-year parts of the curve too.

This should provide an opportunity for greater certainty to be added to the debt portfolio, although a significant fall in inflation will be required to underpin any material movement lower in the longer part of the curve.

Borrowing Outturn for 2024/25

The Finance Team take advice from its external treasury advisor, MUFG Corporate Markets, on the most opportune time to borrow. Movements in rates during 2024/25 are shown in the graph below.



The table below shows PWLB borrowing rates for a selection of maturity periods. The table also shows the high and low points in rates during the year, average rates during the year and individual rates at the start and the end of the financial year.

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	4.77%	4.31%	4.52%	5.08%	4.88%
Date	26/02/2025	17/09/2024	17/09/2024	17/09/2024	17/09/2024
High	5.61%	5.34%	5.71%	6.18%	5.88%
Date	29/05/2024	13/01/2025	13/01/2025	13/01/2025	09/01/2025
Average	5.14%	4.86%	5.07%	5.56%	5.32%
Spread	0.84%	1.03%	1.19%	1.10%	1.00%

PWLB rates are based on gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through HM Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields. Inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation and the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years.

Gilt yields have been volatile through 2024/25. Indeed, the low point for the financial year for many periods was reached in September 2024. Thereafter, and especially following the Autumn Statement, PWLB Certainty rates have remained elevated at between c5% - 6% with the exception of the slightly cheaper shorter dates.

At the close of 31 March 2025, the 1-year PWLB Certainty rate was 4.82% whilst the 25-year rate was 5.98% and the 50-year rate was 5.67%.

There is likely to be a fall in gilt yields and PWLB rates across the whole curve over the next one to two years as Bank Rate falls and inflation (on the Consumer Price Index measure) moves lower.

Loans that have been drawn during 2024/25 are as follows:

General Fund

Lender	Principal	Type	Interest Rate	Maturity
PWLB	£25m	Fixed interest rate	5.24%	18 months
PWLB	£35m	Fixed interest rate	4.89%	12 months
PWLB	£20m	Fixed interest rate	4.83%	12 months
PWLB	£15m	Fixed interest rate	4.85%	22 months
PWLB	£5m	Fixed interest rate	4.87%	26 months
PWLB	£12m	Fixed interest rate	4.90%	25 months
PWLB	£14.9m	Fixed interest rate	4.90%	25 months

Housing Revenue Account

Lender	Principal	Type	Interest Rate	Maturity
PWLB	£19.187m	Fixed interest rate	4.63%	18 months

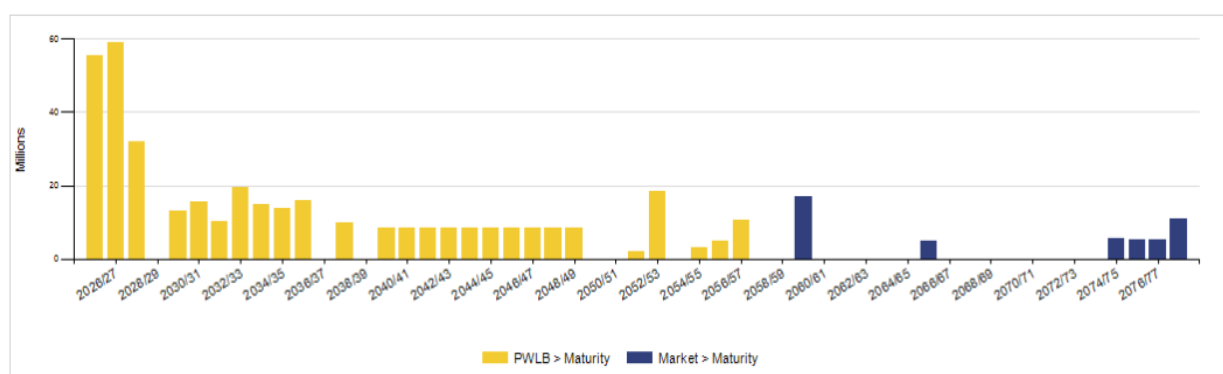
The Authority has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.

The maturity profile of the debt is evenly spread to avoid large repayments in any one financial year. As highlighted above, there has been a tendency over the last 12 months to secure short term borrowing as interest rates are anticipated to reduce over the next 2 years. The total debt portfolio has a maturity range from 1 year to 53 years.

The Treasury Strategy allows up to 15% of the total outstanding debt to mature in any one year. It is prudent to have the Council's debt maturing over many years so

as to minimise the risk of having to refinance when interest rates may be high. The actual debt maturity profile is within these limits

Debt Summary for Shropshire Council



Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have increased over the course of the past six months and will be considered if giving rise to long-term savings.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to renegotiate two of the Market Loans held. This involved a reduction in the maturity date of the loans, but also a lower interest rate was negotiated. This has delivered a benefit in 2024/25 of £0.977m.

Debt rescheduling is only be undertaken:

- to generate cash savings at minimum risk.
- to help fulfil the treasury strategy.
- to enhance the balance of the long term portfolio by amending the maturity profile and/or volatility of the portfolio.

APPENDIX B - INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND OUTTURN 2024/25

Investment Strategy 2024/25

When the Treasury Strategy was approved in March 2024, our treasury advisor had predicted that the Bank rate would decrease during 2024/25 as the inflation rate reduced in the economy. The below forecast table was included in the Treasury Strategy report 2024/25.

UK Interest Rate Forecast

Link Group Interest Rate View 08.01.24													
	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	5.20	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.70	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10
12 month ave earnings	5.00	4.90	4.40	3.90	3.60	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20
5 yr PWLB	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50
10 yr PWLB	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
25 yr PWLB	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
50 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90

In 2024/25 investment of surplus cash continued to be managed by the finance team. The investment priorities are the security of capital and the liquidity of its investments. The Council also aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. Investments are made in line with the Council's policy on creditworthiness which was approved in the Annual Investment Strategy.

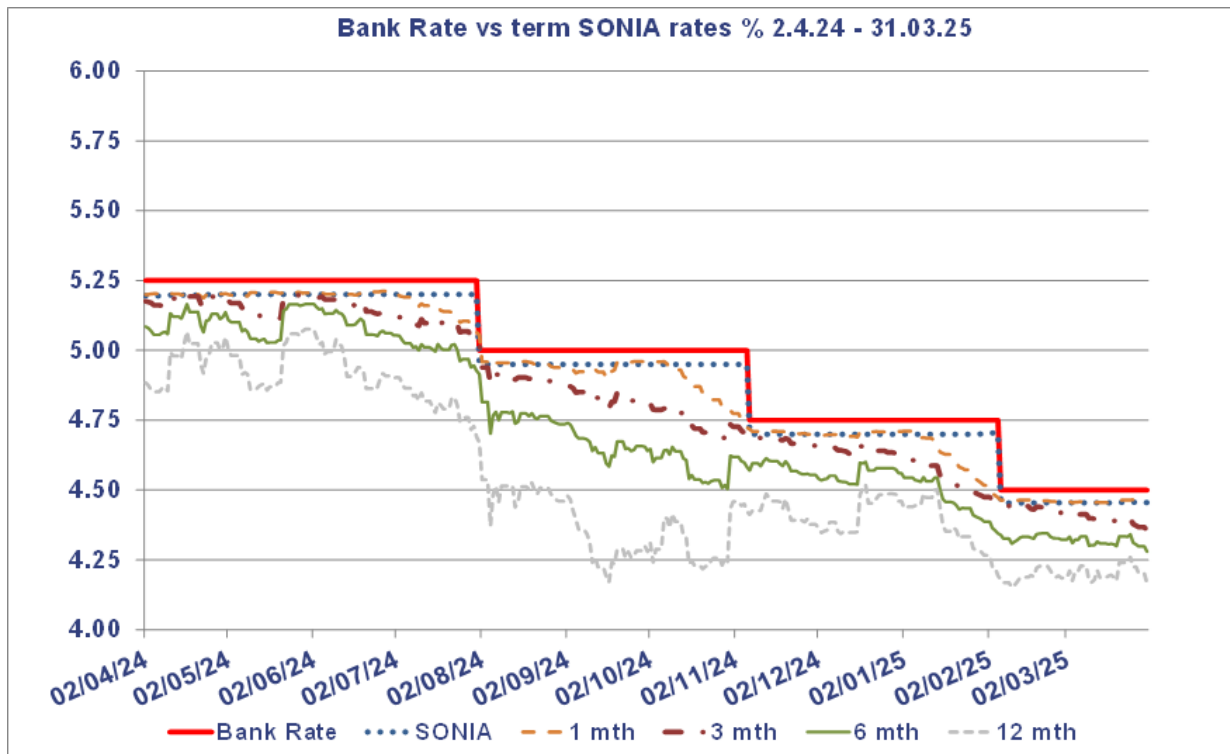
Investment Outturn 2024/25

Investment returns remained robust throughout 2024/25 with Bank Rate reducing steadily through the course of the financial year (three 0.25% rate cuts in total), and even at the end of March the yield curve was still relatively flat, which might be considered unusual as further Bank Rate cuts were expected in 2025/26.

Bank Rate reductions of 0.25% occurred in August, November and February, bringing the headline rate down from 5.25% to 4.5%. Each of the Bank Rate cuts occurred in the same month as the Bank of England publishes its Quarterly Monetary Policy Report, therein providing a clarity over the timing of potential future rate cuts.

As of early April 2025, market sentiment has been heavily influenced of late by President Trump's wide-ranging trade tariffs policy. Commentators anticipate a growing risk of a US recession, whilst UK GDP is projected by the Office for Budget Responsibility to remain tepid, perhaps achieving 1% GDP growth in 2025/26.

Movements in short term rates through the year are shown in the graph below.



At 31 March 2025 the allocation of the cash portfolio was as follows:

Maturity Date	£m
Under 1 month	50.6
1-3 months	0
3-6 months	0
6-9 months	0
9-12 months	0
TOTAL	50.6

The average return on cash investments for the internal treasury team during the year was a return of 4.87%. Recognising the need to manage short term cash flow requirements, the target for the internal team is the Overnight SONIA rate (4.90%). Therefore, the internal finance team are marginally short of the benchmark by 0.03%, which reflects the fact that during the year, the team had to secure short term cash from other local authorities to manage cashflow.

APPENDIX C – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2024/25

The Prudential Code requires the Council to set Prudential Indicators in the Treasury Strategy and report performance against those indicators in the Annual Treasury Report.

As can be seen from the table below, all of the actual indicators are below the targeted level that was set out in the Treasury Strategy for 2024/25. Some variations may appear in sub categories such as in Prudential Indicator 1. This refers to the capital expenditure anticipated during the year, and as can be seen from the indicator, non-HRA capital expenditure has exceeded the original target which may be due to additional funding becoming available during the year. HRA expenditure is lower than the revised indicator and so total capital expenditure still lies within the targeted level.

Prudential Indicators	2024/25 Revised Indicator	2024/25 Actual
1. Capital Expenditure Non-HRA HRA (applies only to housing authorities) TOTAL Financing of capital expenditure Capital receipts Capital grants Other contributions Major Repairs Allowance Revenue Net financing need for the year	£88.2m £29.3m £117.5m £9.8m £57.2m £5.5m £4.8m £0.2m £40.0m	£90.5m £17.4m £107.8m (£0.8m) £61.6m £17.5m £8.6m £0.8m £20.1m
2. Net Borrowing & Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) Non – HRA HRA TOTAL CFR Movement in CFR Gross Borrowing (including HRA) Borrowing to replace previous Internal Borrowing Investments Net Borrowing	£345m £111m £456m £33m £285m £152m £50m £387m	£346m £101m £447m £32m £420m £51m £369m
3. Authorised Limit for External Debt Borrowing Other long term liabilities (PFI) TOTAL	£612m £86m £698m	£420m £111m £531m
4. External Debt – Operational Boundary Borrowing Other long term liabilities (PFI) TOTAL	£546m £86m £632m	£420m £111m £531m

5. Borrowing Limits	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	£273m	£546m	£420m
Variable Interest Rate Exposure	£0m	£273m	£0m
6. Investment Limits	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	£250m	£250m	£51m
Variable Interest Exposure	£0m	£0m	0
7. Maturity Structure of Fixed/Variable Rate Borrowing During 2023/24	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Under 12 mths	0%	15%	13%
12 mths & within 24 mths	0%	15%	14%
24 mths & within 5 years	0%	45%	11%
5 years & within 10 years	0%	75%	18%
10 years & within 20 years	0%	100%	18%
20 years & within 30 years	0%	100%	18%
30 years & within 40 years	0%	100%	4%
40 years & within 50 years	0%	100%	1%
50 years and above	0%	100%	4%
8. Investment Limits			
Upper Limits for Total Principal Sums Invested for over 365 days:			
Externally managed	£50m		£0m
Internally Managed	£70m		£0m



Committee and Date

Audit Committee
16th July 2025

Council
17th July 2025

Item

Public



Audit Committee Annual Assurance Report to Council 2024/25

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	James.Walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 255011
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Heather Kidd, Leader of the Council Duncan Kerr, Chairman of the Audit Committee Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder – Finance		

1. Synopsis

A key part of the Audit Committee's role is to report annually to Full Council on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations. Audit Committee has some concerns and in the light of the Chief Audit Executive's opinion can only provide limited assurance.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Attached to this report is the Audit Committee's Annual Assurance Report to Council for 2024/25. This provides Council with limited assurance that it has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains consistently.
- 2.2 The Audit Committee recognises and is concerned about the limitations identified in the internal control framework as reported in the Chief Audit

Executive's Opinion and the potential impact on value for money. The Committee is requesting an increase in the number of members serving on it to nine and a change to its title to the Audit and Governance Committee.

3. Decisions

- 3.1 Audit Committee is asked to consider and comment on the contents of the draft Annual Assurance report for 2024/25 before forwarding to Council with a recommendation to consider, comment upon and accept this report.

Recommendation to Council

- 3.2 Council is asked to consider and comment on the contents of the Annual Assurance report for 2024/25 before recommending accepting this report.
1. To accept the contents and judgements in this report
 2. To agree to change the name of the Committee to that of the Audit and Governance Committee
 3. To note its recommendation that the membership of the Committee ought to be increased so that it comprises nine Councillors, and one Independent non-voting person.
 4. To appoint the additional four Councillors in accordance with the requirements of political balance.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The Audit Committee's Annual Assurance Report is part of the overall internal control arrangements and risk management process. The Audit Committee objectively examines and evaluates the adequacy of the control environment through the reports it receives and in turn can provide assurances to Council on its governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that inform the Annual Governance Statement
- 4.2. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. There are no direct environmental, equalities, consultation or climate change requirements or consequences of this proposal.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report. In assessing the internal control environment, risk management and governance aspects of

the Council, the Audit Committee can provide a perspective on the overall value for money of these.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. This report does not directly make decisions on energy and fuel consumption; renewable energy generation; carbon offsetting or mitigation; or on climate change adaption. However, the work of the Committee will look at these aspects relevant to the governance, risk management and control environment.

7. Background

- 7.1. A key part of the Audit Committee's role is to report annually to Full Council on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations; providing its opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements. In addition, the Audit Committee should report to Council where they have added value, improved or promoted the control environment and performance in relation to its Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose and functions.
- 7.2. The Audit Committee has a well-established role within the Council, and it is important that an Annual Assurance report based on the work of the Committee is produced and recommended to Council. In compiling this assurance report, information provided at the Audit Committee meeting on 16th July 2025 has also been considered.
- 7.3. In addition, this report has been reviewed to ensure its continuing compliance with CIPFA's Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2022 edition. This requires the Audit Committee to be held to account on a regular basis by the Council specifically in relation to:
- 7.4. Whether the;
- committee has fulfilled its agreed terms of reference;
 - committee has adopted recommended practice;
 - development needs of committee members have been assessed and whether committee members are accessing briefing and training opportunities;
 - committee has assessed its own effectiveness, or been the subject of a review, and the conclusions and actions from that review and,
 - what impact the committee has on the improvement of governance, risk and control within the Council.
- 7.5. The annual assurance report to Council for 2024/25, attached to this report, is an aid to addressing the key areas where the Committee should be held to account. This report has been prepared in conjunction with key Officers who

have supported the committee in the previous year as the current Committee were only appointed in May 2025 following the local elections.

- 7.6. The Leadership Board has developed a new way of operating that will align the resources, systems, governance and strategies of the organisation to the vision, priorities and objectives of The Shropshire Plan, within the financial envelope of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Work to embed this will continue throughout 2025/26 which includes the development of a new Shropshire Plan.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

- CIPFA's Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2022 edition
- CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022
- Audit Committee reports 2024/25

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Audit Committee Annual Assurance Report 2024/25

APPENDIX A

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Governance in and of the public sector continues to be high profile with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) supporting good practice in local government. In Shropshire we have a Code of Corporate Governance which is reviewed annually in line with the best practice issued by CIPFA and SOLACE; we have also produced an Annual Governance Statement, again in line with best practice and legislative requirements. Being well managed and well governed are important attributes in helping to improve performance and in reducing the risk of failing to achieve our objectives and providing good service to our community.
2. Shropshire Council has an Audit Committee that is long established in seeking to maintain and improve our governance procedures. The Committee is a key component of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and a major source of assurance of the Council's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment and reporting on internal and external audit functions and financial and non-financial performance.
3. This year the Committee has held seven planned meetings including the meeting held on 16th July 2025. The previous committee have received and considered a substantial number of reports across key areas of the Council's activity (**see Annex A**).
4. Membership of the Audit Committee for 2024/25 was made up of the following Councillors: Brian Williams (Chairman), Simon Harris (Vice Chairman), Kate Halliday, Nigel Lumby and Roger Evans. Substitutes were invited to attend and contribute at all meetings and training. An independent audit committee member, Jim Arnold was appointed in January 2023. Following the local elections in May 2025 a new committee has been appointed. The opportunity has been taken at this point to review the appropriateness of membership levels to ensure that the committee is adequately resourced to support the Council.
5. The benefits to the Council of operating an effective Audit Committee are:
 - Maintaining public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting.
 - Reinforcing the importance and independence of internal and external audit and any other similar review process; for example, reviewing and approving the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.
 - Providing a sharp focus on financial reporting both during the year and at year end, leading to increased confidence in the objectivity and fairness of the financial reporting process.
 - Assisting the co-ordination of sources of assurance and, in so doing, making management more accountable.

- Providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review.
 - Raising awareness within the Council of the need for governance, internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations.
 - Providing assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements and reducing the risk of illegal or improper acts.
6. The Committee continues to have a professional and arm's length relationship with Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, who attend all meetings of the Committee to offer their advice where needed.
7. The Committee undertakes a substantial range of activities and works closely with both internal and external auditors and the Chief Finance Officer (Executive Director of Resources /Section 151 Officer) in achieving our aims and objectives. We have put together a work and development plan for the year to enable key tasks to be considered and completed.
8. As the newly elected Chair of the Audit Committee, I see training as a key priority for members to undertake our roles effectively. The Committee has undertaken a full and extensive programme in 2024/25. Training has been received in relation to:
- Audit Committee self-assessment and effectiveness of the Audit Committee
 - Risk management
 - Treasury Management
 - Procurement Act
 - The Council's Operating Model
9. Members also have access to CIPFA's Better Governance Forum network which provides specific information in the form of regular briefings, training events, and an informative web site.

Details of Reports/Information Received

10. **Annex A** provides a summary of the key reports and information received by the Audit Committee at its meetings. These appear categorised in the areas which, under the Terms of Reference, Audit Committee have a responsibility to consider and report upon. They are
- Governance;
 - Risk management framework;
 - Controls, including specific focus on:
 - Contracts and partnerships
 - Fraud, corruption and whistleblowing
 - Value for money
11. Following receipt of the reports the Audit Committee:
- Resolved that there were reasonable arrangements for corporate governance and where improvements are required there is a clear improvement plan with dedicated lead officers that will be monitored by Members.

- Resolved that the risk management and assurance framework was fit for purpose and operating as intended.
 - Recognise the increased risks in the control environment and resolved that there is still a need with pressures on resources, fiscal economic factors, the impact of voluntary redundancies and the Council's new Target Operating Model, to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike on the internal control environment.
 - Resolved that there were effective arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and for enabling whistleblowing (confidential reporting).
 - Resolved that there was evidence of effective arrangements in place to support Value for Money but recognised the links to good financial management and sound internal controls in minimising opportunities for waste and fraud and maximising income and use of all assets, and the need to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike given the reported direction of travel of the internal control environment.
 - Resolved that Financial Statements reflected the Council's true position, were complete including all transactions, and were prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.
12. The Chief Audit Executive has offered Limited Assurance for the 2024/25 year on the Council's framework for governance, risk management and internal control. There are a continuing and increased number of high and medium risk rated weaknesses identified in key individual assignments that are significant in aggregate but where discrete parts of the system of internal control remain unaffected. A new council structure and operating model was implemented from March 2025, however it is too early to assess the impact of this on the wider system of internal control. Work with the strategic partner PwC has continued and been refined throughout 2024/25 to help deliver the plan, however the full impact of this engagement is yet to be fully realised. Given that this is the 6th year reporting a limited assurance opinion, it is critical for the Council to demonstrate improvements in governance, internal control, and risk management throughout the 2025/2026 period. The findings of this report highlight the need for a proactive approach in addressing the areas rated limited or unsatisfactory assurance during 2024/2025.
13. A key focus must be placed on fostering a culture where audit recommendations are implemented promptly and effectively. Improved accountability across senior management is critical for ensuring active engagement and successful delivery of the Internal Audit Plan. By prioritising these actions, we can enhance the Council's overall control environment, mitigate risks, and support the organisation's strategic objectives. Continuous improvement in these areas will be vital for achieving long-term success and organisational resilience. It should be noted that External Audit criticised this position in their year-end report presented at the December 2024 Audit Committee meeting.
14. The Chief Audit Executive's overall opinion on the control environment has been "Limited" for six years. The Committee shares the concern that there has been no demonstrable improvement in the internal control environment during

2024/25. There is a significant risk that this position is accepted as the norm and puts further pressure on the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives as set out in the Shropshire Plan. It is therefore crucial that appropriate action is taken to reverse this position.

15. This will require a culture change across the organisation and embedding of the values and principles of audit and governance in every part of the Council. This will not be an easy task as the Council faces the following challenges:

- a) For six years in succession the Council has only received a limited assurance on the Council's framework for governance, risk and internal control from the Chief Audit Executive.
- b) The turnover of Councillors at the election means that three of the five members of the Audit Committee are new to the Council and, like the many other new members, face a steep learning curve.
- c) The Council faces an unprecedented financial situation which was adjudged to be perilous two years ago and has worsened since then with external audit identifying significant weakness in financial stability and governance. There is likely to be a corresponding increase in public scrutiny as tough decisions have to be made focussing attention on efficiency, effectiveness, value for money and good governance.
- d) The latest update of the strategic risk register shows a very significant increased risk of failure of officers and members to adhere to governance arrangements.

16. In order for the Audit Committee to play a leading role in establishing this new culture and addressing the issues that have led to the Council's assurance being limited it is requested that the Council increase the size of the Committee by four members so that all groups on the Council can be represented on it and it has the capacity to manage its work through sub-groups or working parties if appropriate. It is also requested that the title is amended to "Audit and Governance Committee" to make its role clearer.

Audit Service Staff

17. The key Internal Audit staff were Barry Hanson, Head of Policy and Governance and his deputy, Internal Audit Manager, Katie Williams.

18. Without the support of all Audit staff and, in particular, of the officers mentioned above, it would not be possible for the Audit Committee to be as highly effective as peer comparisons show us to be. My thanks and that of my fellow committee members are given to all our Audit Service officers.

Annual Statement of Assurance

19. Based on:

- The work carried out by the Internal and External Auditors and their reports presented to this Committee;
- Reports from service managers and;
- The work carried out by the Section 151 Officer, Head of Policy and Governance and their reports presented to this Committee

The Audit Committee recognises and is concerned about the limitations identified in the internal control framework and the impact on value for money. Therefore on balance, the Audit Committee can provide limited assurance, founded on those reports, explanations and assurances received, that the Council has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control systems; internal, external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects.

Signed Date

On behalf of the Audit Committee

ANNEX A

Summary of assurance reports received by Audit Committee

Governance

- **Management report - ; Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and a review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls and Shropshire's Code of Corporate Governance**

Report of the Section 151 Officer on the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and the production of the Annual Governance Statement. In addition, he reported on compliance with the Corporate Governance Code as reasonable. It confirmed the Council's commitment to the principles of good corporate governance and set out clear improvements targeted at managing known strategic risk areas for 2025/26.

- **Internal Audit – Annual review of Internal Audit, Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) 2024/25**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which provided Members with the results of the 2024/25 self-assessment of the Internal Audit Service against the requirements of the Public Sector Audit Standards, compliance against which demonstrates an effective Internal Audit service. There are no areas where the Internal Audit function is not complying with the Code and, whilst there are areas of partial compliance, these are not considered significant and do not compromise compliance with the code. It was noted the report should be read in conjunction with the Internal Audit Annual Report.

- **Annual review of Audit Committee terms of reference**

Report of the S151 Officer which ensures that the Council continues to provide an effective Audit Committee. Terms of Reference are considered and approved by members annually. There were no significant changes proposed in 2024/25.

- **Annual Audit Committee self-assessment**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which requested members to review and comment on compliance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's guidance on the function and operation of audit committees. There is significant compliance with the code and an improvement plan to address one area of partial compliance.

- **Internal Audit Charter and Mandate**

Report of the Chief Audit Executive which set out the requirement for an annual review of the Internal Audit Charter and Mandate which had been completed. The Charter demonstrates how Internal Audit complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Audit Committee approves the Charter which incorporates the mandate, mission, code of ethics, definition and core principles of Internal Audit. There were no significant changes.

- **Draft Audit Committee annual work plan and future learning and development requirements 2025/26**

Report of the Chief Audit Executive which provided a proposed Audit Committee work plan and sought discussion and agreement around a learning and development plan for members to ensure they were well informed and appropriately skilled to fulfil their role. Therefore ensuring the integrity of the financial reporting and governance of the Council.

The Audit Committee resolved that there were reasonable arrangements for corporate governance and where improvements are required there is a clear improvement plan with dedicated lead officers that will be monitored by Members.

Risk Management Framework

➤ **Management report: Risk Annual Report 2023/24**

Report of the Risk and Business Continuity Manager provided an overview of the activity of the Risk Management Team during 2023/2024 with a synopsis of the current risk exposure of the Council in relation to strategic, operational and project risks. The Risk Management audit for 2023/24 had received “reasonable” assurance and the Risk and Business Continuity Manager confirmed all recommendations had now been actioned.

➤ **Management report: Strategic risks update**

The management of the strategic risks is a key process which underpins the successful achievement of our priorities and outcomes. Strategic risks are linked, where appropriate, with the Annual Governance Statement Targeted Outcomes.

Reports during the year set out the existing strategic risk exposure. There were 11 strategic risks on the strategic risk register at the time of the biannual review in June 2024. Seven of these were high risk and two were medium. The report provided the rationale for the increased risk scores and noted that 100% of strategic risks were above the tolerance level.

As part of the review in December 2024 strategic risk were reassessed. 9 were assessed as high risk and who as medium. Three strategic risks were scores at the maximum level of 25, those being:

- Failure to protect and manage the impact of a targeted cyber attack on ICT systems used by the Authority.
- Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year.
- Inability to set a balanced budget for a given year within the MTFS

Strategic risks are monitored to enable achievement of Council priorities and outcomes and are linked, where appropriate, with the Annual Governance Statement Targeted Outcomes.

➤ **Internal Audit report of the review of Risk Management audit 2024/25**

Report of the Internal Audit Manager which summarised the detailed findings identified in the Internal Audit review of risk management of which the overall control environment had been assessed as reasonable, with minor control weaknesses identified. The focus of the review was on user compliance with processes around operational and project risks.

➤ **Draft Internal Audit Annual plan 2025/26**

The draft plan will be presented to the July Audit Committee for consideration and approval. The plan was delayed from the February meeting given the significant senior leadership change, the new Council operating model and Council structure due to be

defined over the coming months it was not possible to complete a full short-term assessment. It was considered prudent to wait for this to be completed before undertaking a full audit needs assessment for the 2025/26 financial year. This will allow Internal Audit resources to be targeted on high priority / high risk areas as defined by the new structures and allow the new Committee to comment on the planned audit work.

The Audit Committee resolved that the risk management and assurance framework was fit for purpose and operating as intended.

Controls

➤ **Management Update: Blue Badges**

The Transactional Management and Licensing Team Leader provided an update on action taken to address the recommendations made in the 2022/23 audit report and provide Members with an update on the number of applications as requested at the February 2024 meeting. A follow up audit had been completed in April 2024 which confirmed action had been taken to address the recommendations and the overall assurance level had improved from limited to good.

➤ **Management Update: Cyber Security**

The Head of Automation and Technology provided an update on the Council's current position in relation to the strategic risk of "Failure to protect from and manage the impact of a successful targeted cyber-attack on ICT systems used by the authority." This followed a request at the June Audit Committee members where Members challenged the scoring of the strategic risk at the highest level of 25 (5 for likelihood and 5 for impact).

➤ **Management Report: North West Relief Road Management Update**

At the February 2024 Audit Committee members requested a further management update in response to the unsatisfactory audit report and two fundamental recommendations.

The Director of Place provided an update on improvements made to address the recommendations in the recent audit of the North West Relief Road project management arrangements.

Following dissatisfaction with the progress made implementing the recommendations and further work highlighted by External Audit the Committee requested a further update in February 2025. The project was subject to new management arrangements following the departure of the Executive Director of Place. Management assurance was received that steps were now in place to address the governance weaknesses identified.

➤ **Management Update: Bishops Castle Community College**

Audit Committee members requested a management update following an unsatisfactory audit and two fundamental recommendations. The Head teacher provided an update on the actions taken since the audit to address the recommendations. The Committee expressed their concern regarding the length of time it had taken to comply with the recommendations.

➤ **Management Update: Social Media**

The Audit Committee requested an update on the actions taken to address the recommendations raised in the unsatisfactory audit of the Council's Social Media arrangements. Management assurance was provided that actions were underway to address the recommendations made in the audit report however, some of these actions had log implementation dates due to the structural changes required. It was also noted that further changes to the team as part of the Council's restructure could impact this.

➤ **Management Update: The Lantern**

Members received an update regarding the actions taken to address the repeated unsatisfactory audit assurance opinion. The establishment had been subject to repeated audits of its income collection and letting arrangements. Management assurances were provided that recommendations were either completed or in progress based on the implementation of a new booking system.

➤ **Management Update External Catering Contracts**

The Audit Committee received a management update on the progress made in implementing a fundamental recommendation made as part of an audit of Shire Services External Catering contracts. Management assurance was provided that significant progress had been made ensuring that signed contracts were in place for the majority of their school contracts.

➤ **Internal Audit performance report and revised annual audit plan 2024/25**

Report of the Chief Audit Executive provided Members with an update of the work undertaken by Internal Audit throughout the year. By September Members were informed that 31% of the revised plan had been completed. Performance which was slightly behind previous delivery records. Revisions were made to the plan following a successful recruitment campaign.

By the year end the Chief Audit Executive informed members that 96% of the revised plan had been completed and Internal Audit continued to add value to the Council in supporting its business continuity processes and the delivery of bespoke pieces of work, including sharing best practice and providing advice on system developments.

Lower assurance levels and fundamental recommendations were separately identified throughout the year. Where appropriate, members requested management updates at subsequent meetings.

➤ **Internal Audit annual report 2024/25**

Report of the Chief Audit Executive on achievements against the revised internal audit plan for 2024/25 and the annual internal audit assurance. The Chief Audit Executive gave limited assurance for the year that the Council's framework for governance, risk management and internal control is sound and working effectively.

Revisions were made to the plan to reflect both changing resources and risks. There are a continuing and increased number of high and medium risk rated weaknesses identified in key individual assignments that are significant in aggregate but where discrete parts of the system of internal control remain unaffected.

The Audit Committee recognise the increased risks in the control environment and resolved that there is still a need to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike on the internal control environment.

Controls: Fraud, Corruption and Whistleblowing

➤ **Fraud, special investigation and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) update (Exempted by categories 2, 3 and 7)**

Members are provided with exempt reports of the Internal Audit Manager providing an update on the current fraud and special investigations undertaken by Internal Audit and current RIPA activity. From February 2025 these updates now include details of exemptions from the Council's Contract and Financial Rules in relation to procurement activity.

Following the departure of the postholder under the voluntary redundancy programme there are currently no arrangements in place for RIPA activity. The last update was received in July 2024 with the interim arrangements still yet to be decided.

➤ **Annual review of Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Strategy and activities, including an update on the National Fraud Initiative**

Report of the Chief Audit Executive outlined the measures undertaken in the last year to evaluate the potential for the occurrence of fraud, and how the Council managed these risks with the aim of prevention, detection and subsequent reporting of fraud, bribery and corruption. It also provided an update on the action plan to ensure continuous improvement and an update to members in response to national and local issues. It was confirmed that the Strategy had been reviewed and updated to reflect both best practice and to continue to be aligned with the updated Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy 2020. The Council can never be free from fraud activities, but continues to be focused on acknowledging, preventing and pursuing fraud, bribery and corruption and Audit Committee members reaffirmed the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Strategy.

➤ **Annual Whistleblowing report**

Report of the Assistant Director of Workforce which detailed the cases reported under the Whistleblowing arrangements. Assurance was provided as to the currency of the Whistleblowing Policy and its effectiveness. There has been 23 whistleblowing reports in 2023/24, a slight decrease on the previous year. The committee requested that a note be included in the Chief Executive's weekly staff newsletter to raise awareness of the policy. This was included on the weekly staff Update on 25th July 2024 and on the Leader's Briefing for July 2024.

The Audit Committee resolved that there were effective arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and for enabling whistleblowing (confidential reporting).

Controls: Value for Money

Sound internal controls lead to the effective, efficient and economic use of Council resources (VFM), assurances are taken from the robustness of the internal control

environment, management of risks, soundness of governance and any additional reports add weight to these.

➤ **External Audit: Pension fund audit plan**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) setting out the Pension fund plan for the accounting year ending 31 March 2024.

➤ **External Audit: Shropshire Council audit plan**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) setting out the plan for the audit of Shropshire Council for the accounting year ending 31 March 2024.

The Audit Committee resolved that there was evidence of effective arrangements in place to support Value for Money but recognised the links to good financial management and sound internal controls in minimising opportunities for waste and fraud and maximising income and use of all assets, and the need to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike given the reported direction of travel of the internal control environment.

Financial reporting

➤ **External Audit: Shropshire County Pension Fund Audit Findings (Information) 2023/24**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) summarised the findings for the year ended 31 March 2024 on the audit of the Pension Fund financial statements. It confirmed that there were no issues around the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern and that it was intended to issue an unqualified opinion to the Pensions Committee.

➤ **External Audit: Audit progress report and sector update**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) which highlighted progress and provided a summary of emerging national issues and developments of relevance to the Council.

In December 2024 the Engagement Lead confirmed that the majority of the work had been completed for the Shropshire Council accounts for 2023/24. They were unable to conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate due to an outstanding objection from 2020/21 and 2023/24, however, they were satisfied that the work would not have a material impact on the financial statements for 2023/24.

➤ **Financial outturn report 2024/25**

The report from the Section 151 Officer providing details of the revenue outturn position for the Council and the full year capital expenditure and financing of the Council's capital programme will be presented to the July Committee.

➤ **Approval of the Council's Statement of Accounts 2024/25 including a review of accounting policies**

September 2024: The Committee received the report of the Section 151 Officer which provided the final approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 detailing the final amendments to the Draft Statement of Accounts made during the audit process.

November 2024: The External Audit Engagement Lead presented their final statement of accounts for 2023/24 for approval.

February 2025: The 2023/24 accounts were presented and approved by the Audit Committee but had not been signed off by External Audit due to delays on their part relating to infrastructure assets.

The report from the Section 151 Officer providing an overview of the Accounts for the year 2024/25 and details of the reasons for the most significant changes between the 2024/25 Accounts will be presented to the July Committee.

Treasury Management

➤ Annual treasury report 2023/24

Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Technology (Deputy Section 151) which set out the borrowing and investment outturn for 2023/24, together with the Treasury limits and Prudential Indicators. This confirmed all appropriate CIPFA regulations and indicators has been followed and the team outperformed the benchmark by 0.79% delivering a return of 4.79%. It was also confirmed that an Internal Audit had been completed of the Treasury function and had received a “good” assurance rating.

➤ Treasury Strategy 2024/25 mid-year report

Report of Section 151 Officer which provided Members with an economic update for the first six months of 2024/25, along with reviews of the Treasury Strategy 2024/25 and Annual Investment Strategy, the Council's investment portfolio for 2024/25, the Council's borrowing strategy for 2024/25, any debt rescheduling taken and compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits for 2024/25.

➤ Treasury Strategy 2025/26

Report of the Section 151 Officer which proposed the Treasury Strategy for 2025/26. It set out the arrangements for how the council would appropriately manage its arrangements for banking, cash flow management, investments, and borrowing, supporting the delivery of the MTFS and The Shropshire Plan. He explained that the report set out the current market conditions that the Council were working within along with the prudential indicators which gave a measure of the financial viability from a capital point of view and a borrowing point of view for the organisation.

The Audit Committee resolved that Financial Statements reflected the Council's true position, were complete including all transactions, and were prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards



Annual Council

17 July 2025

Item

Public



CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS – AUDIT COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer:	Tim Collard		
email:	tim.collard@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	(01743) 252756
Portfolio Holder	Heather Kidd, Leader Shropshire Council		

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 To consider a change of name and an increase in the membership of the Audit Committee. This report deals with the consequential revised constitution of committees, the overall entitlement of seats for each of the political groups and the proportionate allocation of seats between the groups across all committees.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Council will have seen the recommendation within the Audit Committee Annual Assurance Report to Council 2024/25 to increase in the size of the Audit Committee from 5 to 9 members and to change its name to the Audit and Governance Committee. In particular, at paragraph 16 of the Statement of the Chairman of the Audit Committee he states:

“In order for the Audit Committee play a leading role in establishing this new culture and addressing the issues that have led to the Council’s assurance being limited it is requested that the Council increase the size of the Committee by four members so that all groups on the Council can be represented on it and it has the capacity to manage its work through sub-groups or working parties if appropriate. It is also requested that the title is amended to “Audit and Governance Committee” to make its role clearer.”

- 2.2. The provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 require the Council to review the representation of each political group on committees, panels etc. at each annual meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The regulations require that all Scrutiny, Standing and Regulatory Committees are politically balanced across the total number of committee places. Subject to that overriding requirement, each committee must also be politically balanced, as far as it is reasonably practicable. An increase in the size of a committee requires that the overall allocation of seats is reconsidered.
- 2.3 The Executive (Cabinet) is not subject to the political balance rules.
- 2.4 Advisory Committees and other ad hoc bodies and groups are not subject to the political balance rules either, but traditionally political proportionality has been applied to them outside the overall aggregate balance referred to in paragraph 2.2 above.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Council approves the change of name of the Audit Committee to the Audit and Governance Committee and an increase in its membership from five to nine members.
- 3.2. That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.3. That the leaders of the Liberal Democrat, Reform UK and Conservative groups notify officers which members will take up the additional Audit Committee seats available to their group.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The Council is obliged to ensure that the membership of committees and related bodies is proportionate to individual group membership.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The allocation of seats on Committees will have no obvious financial implications.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The allocation of seats on Committees will have no obvious impact in terms of climate change.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council is requested to approve an increase in number of members of the Audit Committee from 5 to 9 and the overall revised constitution of committees.
- 7.2. This requires 112 seats to be allocated proportionately across all committees and the Council is requested to approve the overall constitution as set out below:

<u>Committee Name</u>	<u>Seats per Committee</u>
Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Pensions Committee	4
Audit Committee	9
Strategic Licensing Committee	15
Standards Committee	9
Southern Planning Committee	11
Northern Planning Committee	11
Housing Supervisory Board	9
Total	<u>112</u>

8. Allocation of Seats

- 8.1. The Council is required to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups for the coming year.
- 8.2. The maximum number of seats available to each group within the political balance rules will be:

<u>Group Name</u>	<u>Seats per Group</u>
Liberal Democrats	64
Reform	23
Conservatives	11
Green and Progressive Independent	7
Labour	6
Non Aligned	1
Total	<u>112</u>

- 8.3. The proportionate allocation of seats to the political groups across all committees is set out in Appendix 1.
- 8.4. An additional 4 seats added to the Audit Committee results in an increase in the Liberal Democrat membership of the Committee by 2 to 5, Reform UK by 1 to 2. The Conservative Group is also now represented with 1 seat.
- 8.5. The Council is entitled to 10 seats on the Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority. Under the present arrangements, the Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to 6 seats, the Reform Group 2 seats, the Conservative Group 1 seat and the Green and Progressive Independent Group 1 seat. This will remain unchanged.

- 8.6 The proposed allocation of seats meets the legal requirements, however, should the Council wish, it is possible to agree allocations which are not strictly politically balanced if no Member dissents.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made thereunder.

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

APPENDIX 1

ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Composition of the Council	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Cons	Green & PI	Lab	Ind	Total
	42	15	7	5	4	1	74

SCRUTINY

	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Cons	Green & PI	Lab	Ind	Total
Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7	2	1	0	1	0	11
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6	2	1	1	1	0	11
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6	3	1	1	0	0	11
Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6	2	1	1	0	1	11

STANDING AND REGULATORY

	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Cons	Green & PI	Lab	Ind	Total
Pensions Committee	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
Audit Committee	5	2	1	0	1	0	9
Standards	5	2	1	1	0	0	9
Strategic Licensing Committee	9	3	2	1	0	0	15
Northern Planning Committee	6	2	1	1	1	0	11
Southern Planning Committee	6	2	1	1	1	0	11
Housing Supervisory Board	5	2	1	0	1	0	9
Aggregate No Seats Required	64	23	11	7	6	1	112

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COMMITTEE

Council
17 July 2025

Item

Public



Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025

Responsible Officer:		Billy Webster	
email:	Billy Webster	Tel:	07977 712088
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Heather Kidd – Leader	

1. Synopsis

This report is to seek approval for the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (“the Act”) sets out duties for local authorities. In summary these are to:

- appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) (in line with core membership set out in the Act and statutory guidance), which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified functions
- assess the need for safe accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area
- in consultation with the partnership board, develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality – which is based on the needs assessment, is implemented through commissioning decisions, and includes monitoring and evaluation

2.2. The most recent Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy was published in 2022 following consideration by members. It aimed to present the Shropshire position in relation to the provision of safe accommodation

and support as well as making suggestions and recommendations around how we could improve in this area and bridge identified gaps.

- 2.3. As per our statutory duty, in 2024 Shropshire Council conducted a Needs Assessment to inform commissioning of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in all forms of safe accommodation as defined in the Act. In addition to supporting the Council in meeting our statutory duty we delivered a full review that can inform the development of a wider strategy and deliver the development of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.
- 2.4. The provision of Safe Accommodation not only meets our statutory function under the Act, but it also aligns with our safeguarding protocols and procedures in that it provides a safe space for all victims; including children, to flee too should they be at risk of serious and imminent harm or death.
- 2.5. The 2024 needs assessment (Appendix 1) has informed the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 (Appendix 2).
- 2.6. The Strategy is largely consistent with our previous strategy, with no material differences, as the original objectives and plans have delivered what was required and remain appropriate to the needs identified.
- 2.7. Work is now underway to commission a domestic abuse service that will seek to bridge the gaps found in the needs assessment and achieve the recommendations of the strategy.
- 2.8. We are now developing a partnership-wide domestic abuse strategy that will include Safe Accommodation and set out the collective actions needed to meet the recommendations from the needs assessment.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. To approve and publish the Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 as set out in Appendix 2
- 3.2. That Council agrees this document will be incorporated into a partnership-wide domestic abuse strategy, with clearly defined actions to address the recommendations set out in the 2024 Needs Assessment.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The production and publishing of a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation strategy every 3 years is a statutory duty of the Local Authority and as such there could be consequences for failing to deliver Part 4 of the Act.
- 4.2. The strategy outlines the local context and needs, reviews current provision of safer accommodation, and then outlines how the Council, in partnership with others, will agree medium-term objectives, and put in place plans, to provide sufficient solutions and support for those who need it. Thereby, ensuring we meet our duties within the Act.
- 4.3. By not having a strategy that is agreed we will have no clear direction to be working towards and the commissioning of support in safe accommodation may not meet a strategic direction nor an operational need.
- 4.4. With no clear direction we run the risk of reputational damage as we could be seen as a local authority who does not comply with its statutory functions
- 4.5. Further to our failure to comply with our statutory function we also run the risk of not providing the right safe accommodation for people, resulting in them staying in abusive relationships which could result in serious harm or death.
- 4.6. We have a duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and the provision of safe accommodation can form part of a safeguarding safety plan. Without a clear strategic direction, we risk failing to safeguard appropriately and in partnership with the wider system.
- 4.7. Since the writing of this Strategy the Supreme Court has made its judgement on the definition of sex for the purposes of the Equality Act and the impact on single sex spaces. Any impact resulting from this judgement in Shropshire will be addressed in the partnership wide domestic abuse strategy going forwards
- 4.8. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Failure to produce and publish a safe accommodation strategy as per the legislative requirements	Council to sign off and agree to publish
Lack of a coordinated partnership responses to deliver and meet safe accommodation need	Collaborate with partners to ensure the adoption and implementation of the safe accommodation strategy is co-ordinated
The wrong services are commissioned to meet the identified need	A clear strategy that is adopted and implemented that relays the direction of travel for commissioning of a safe accommodation support service
The correct amount or type of accommodation is not available for people where and when they need it	A clear strategy that is adopted and implemented that relays the direction of travel for commissioning of a safe accommodation support service

Failure to follow safeguarding procedures resulting in serious harm or death	Ensure the safe accommodation strategy is a partnership document that aligns with safeguarding procedures and protocols and is adopted and implemented by all partners.
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5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands as budgeted for within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 27 February 2025 and subsequent updates. It is also addressed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has and continues to be undertaken to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve
- scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope,
 - delaying implementation, or
 - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2. By publishing this strategy, we are showing our commitment to our statutory duty and our commitment to those that need to access safe accommodation. This enables us to appropriately spend the grant provided by the UK Government via the Ministry of Homes Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and not need to make use of the Council's budgets.
- 5.3. With a clear strategic direction for safe accommodation based on our findings from a needs assessment and taking account recommendations made, we can make substantial savings to the public purse. Women's Aid mapped a survivor journey showing the true cost across the whole system and compared this to a journey that took account of accessing specialist safe accommodation services. They found a substantial reduction in costs with the real journey costing £183,373 compared to £23,966, thereby saving £159,407 (**See appendix 3**).

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Due to the nature of the type of service this strategy addresses and we subsequently commission, there is no effect in relation to climate change.
- 6.2. We are responsible for commissioning the support into the property and could place a condition in the tender document around the energy efficiency of properties however this could reduce the number of properties being allocated/made available.

- 6.3. We could look to develop and build our own efficient portfolio of accommodation. However, the grant funding for safe accommodation mentioned in this report is not for development.
- 6.4. Legislation is aiming to achieve all domestic rental properties needing to have an EPC Level C or above from 2030. We could look to ensure the properties we provide support in to are being brought up to standard to comply with this. [Domestic private rented property: minimum energy efficiency standard - landlord guidance - GOV.UK.](#)

7. Background

- 7.1. Under the Act, all local authorities must have a safe accommodation strategy.
- 7.2. In 2022 we published a Safe Accommodation strategy that outlined our recommendations at that time and after completing the 2024 needs assessment it was evident that not much had changed.
- 7.3. The DALPB, who are responsible for this strategy acknowledge that due to several changes of direction, action-orientated work has not been completed.
- 7.4. The DALPB will redress this through the collaborative writing of the partnership-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy inclusive of actions and timescales.
- 7.5. The recommendations in the 2024 Needs Assessment ensure that Shropshire Council are considering Part 7 of the Act in relation to Homelessness and the amendment to Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. This relates to the priority need of those fleeing domestic abuse. And Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to the grant of secure tenancies in cases of domestic abuse.
- 7.6. While this specific strategy has not been consulted on due to its size and limited material change, all recommendations from the 2024 Needs Assessment will be discussed and prioritised in order to form the basis of the Partnership-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy, and this will involve full consultation with partners, stakeholders, and the general public.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. Despite bullet point 7.5 above, it is worth noting in the most recent Domestic Abuse Commissioners report entitled: Victims in their own right?: Babies, Children and Young People they state;

“The Homelessness Code of Guidance makes clear that the homelessness legislation is independent of the Safe Accommodation Duty and only suggests that housing authorities “may wish to consider the descriptions of relevant safe

accommodation. There is no legal requirement on the local authorities to do this.”

[dac_bcyp_main-report_FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf](#)

- 8.2. Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant is a separate grant that has been consolidated into the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS). We are asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which outlines the purpose and expectations of the grant. It refers to eligible expenditure incurred or to be incurred by local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The provision of safe accommodation for those who need access to it is a statutory duty on Local Authorities. The strategy not only provides the direction of travel locally for all partners, but it also forms the basis of commissioning the right accommodation in the right places. As part of this the Council is required to maintain and publish the Safe Accommodation Strategy, thereby helping to ensure we have a strategic and clear direction of travel in relation to this area of work.
- 9.2. A coordinated strategic direction and response to safe accommodation will mean that the Council and its partners will be better placed to prevent people’s lives being put at risk.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment
Appendix 2 Safe Accommodation Strategy
Appendix 3 Tracy’s Journey

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

Research and reporting undertaken by Shropshire Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Domestic abuse has a profound impact on the lives and well-being of individuals and communities across Shropshire, and its effects can be long-lasting, in some cases tragically, resulting in loss of life. Domestic abuse is recognised as a key area for action in Shropshire.
 - 1.2. This report provides a summary of the findings of a domestic abuse needs assessment, completed by the Domestic Abuse Prevention Team at Shropshire Council.
 - 1.3. This needs assessment has been initiated in response to the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (see next section). While it focuses on evaluating the need for support within safe accommodation in Shropshire and addressing any identified gaps, its scope is broader. To create a comprehensive understanding of domestic abuse in Shropshire, the assessment examines the overall need, demand for services, service provision, and the responses of all partners, both individually and collaboratively. Additionally, it incorporates ongoing engagement and feedback from individuals with lived experience of domestic abuse in Shropshire. This combined data will inform decision-making, service planning, and strategy development.
 - 1.4. The partnership approach and response to domestic abuse in Shropshire, is governed by the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP)¹. Domestic abuse has been identified as one of the joint priorities for the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership, due to the impact on children, adults with care and support needs and our communities. The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) reports to the SSCP Community Safety Board.
 - 1.5. The findings of this needs assessment will inform the design of Shropshire's Domestic Abuse Strategy and will enable us to update our "Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy" as per our Statutory Duty.
-

2. Domestic abuse Act 2021

- 2.1. The Domestic Abuse Act² received Royal Assent in April 2021, introducing a range of measures to:
 - Raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families
 - Further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice

¹ [Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership \(2024\) Strategic Plan and Priorities](#)

² [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

- Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.

Domestic abuse Act 2021 Statutory Requirements

- 2.2. The needs assessment enables Shropshire Council to meet the [statutory requirements of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), which places duties on Shropshire Council to:
- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions.
 - Assess the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all survivors and their children who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area.
 - Develop and publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy having regard to the needs assessment.
 - Implement the strategy through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions.
 - Monitor and evaluate local delivery and effectiveness of the strategy.
 - Report back to central government annually.
- 2.3. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance³ outlines specific requirements for authorities regarding the review and updating of their strategies and policies. Authorities are required to refresh their domestic abuse strategy annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective in addressing the current needs and circumstances of domestic abuse victims and perpetrators. In addition to the annual refresh, authorities must conduct a comprehensive review and develop a new domestic abuse strategy every three years. This allows for a more in-depth evaluation and adjustment of policies and practices to better tackle domestic abuse. These measures are designed to ensure that the response to domestic abuse is continuously improved and adapted to changing situations and insights.
- 2.4. **Recommendation:** To include the requirement for the Local Authority, Shropshire Council to refresh the domestic abuse needs assessment annually, in future action plans.
- 2.5. Shropshire Council has been awarded funding from government to implement the statutory duty highlighted above, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Future levels of funding are dependent on the national government Spending Review.
- 2.6. The prevention of domestic abuse and the protection of all victims lies at the heart of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The measures within the Domestic Abuse Act seek to:
- Promote awareness by introducing a statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognising children as victims in their own right.
 - Protect and support victims by establishing in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner, introducing new domestic abuse protection notices and domestic abuse protection orders, and placing a new duty of local authorities to provide support to victims in refuges and other forms of safe accommodation.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021/domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance-accessible-version>

- Hold preparators to account by extending the definition of some existing offences and creating a new offence of non-fatal strangulation.
- Transform the justice response by helping victims to give their best evidence in the criminal court by through the use of video evidence, screen etc and ensuring that victims are abuse do not suffer further trauma in family court proceedings by being cross-examined by the perpetrator.
- Improve performance – driving consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse

2.7. Following implementation of the Act, Shropshire Council carried out the previous Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment in 2022⁴ and published its [Safe Accommodation Strategy](#), which informed the commissioning of accommodation-based support. The service commenced in April 2023 providing support to all victims aged sixteen and over, who access any form of safe accommodation and support to children and young people living in safe accommodation with their parent. The Local Authority Domestic Abuse Prevention Team with partners from the DALPB are leading this work.

2.8. A new wider strategy will be developed using the data from this needs assessment. The strategy will be supported by an action plan that is driven forward by Shropshire's DALPB; a multi-agency board established to ensure there is a joined-up approach to tackling domestic abuse.

2.9. This report refers to those who have been subjected to domestic abuse as “victims” or “survivors” as these are widely understood terms and used in many of the data sources. It is recognised that this terminology can be controversial and different people may have preferences for other terms. The decision to use these definitions is purely for clarity and not an indication that other terms are not valid. Data from the different sources do not necessarily relate to the same victims, although there will be some overlap.

2.10. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides the following definition:
 “Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive”.

Abusive behaviour is defined as any of the following:

- Physical or Sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, Emotional, or other abuse

Personally connected is defined in the act as parties who:

- are married to each other
- are civil partners of each other

⁴ [Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2022](#)

- have agreed to marry one another (whether the agreement has been terminated or not)
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether the agreement has been terminated or not)
- are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child are relatives

However, there are alternative definitions of domestic abuse such as Women's Aid⁵ which define domestic abuse as "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality." This definition recognises the cyclical nature of domestic abuse, whereas the full legal definition indicates that domestic abuse can be a one-off incident.

- 2.11. Insight into the prevalence of domestic abuse can be found from The Crime Survey for England and Wales (2023) shown below. However, it must be considered that the current number of crimes recorded against everyone for this survey is capped at five. Findings from the Office for National Statistics Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2023 were as follows:



- 2.12. According to the Office for National Statistics census data provided in 2021⁶, 323,619 people lived in Shropshire, with 163,927 being female and 159,692 being male.

Taking the nationally recognised statistic that 1 in 3 females are subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime and 1 in 6 men, it could be assumed that:

- 54,000 women in Shropshire are subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime
- 27,000 males in Shropshire are subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime

⁵ Women's Aid definition of domestic abuse accessed via: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/> (accessed July 2024).

⁶ Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census

3. National Government Response to Domestic Abuse

- 3.1. The Government published its Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan in 2022, and set the following priorities:
- Prioritising Prevention
 - Supporting Victims
 - Stronger System
 - Pursuing Perpetrators

These priorities were created to drive down the prevalence of domestic abuse and domestic abuse homicide and provide victims and survivors with the support they need.

- 3.2. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2023)⁷ released a strategic plan which centres around prevention of domestic abuse, protection of survivors as well as provision of services and working in partnership.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- 3.3. The Government launched a call for evidence in 2020⁸ to gain understanding of the true scale of violence against women and girls' crimes and its impact, to help determine which measures may help identify and prevent these crimes. As well as the extent to which current legislation and services are being used effectively to tackle them, and to identify examples of best practice. The findings of this call for evidence, helped to shape and inform the National Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2021-24⁹ which outlines there is an identified need to increase support for victims and survivors, to build on increases in reporting to the police for these crimes and to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls.
- 3.4. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)¹⁰ released a call to action in 2024. The National Policing Statement for VAWG, commissioned by the NPCC and College of Policing, found:
- Over one million VAWG related crimes were recorded during 2022/23, accounting for 20% of all police recorded crime.
 - Police recorded VAWG related crime increased by 37% between 2018-23.
- 3.5. The NPCC states that not only is Violence Against Women and Girls increasing, but there have been more complicated types of offending being seen, which causes significant harm to victims and society. One in every six murders was domestic abuse related during

⁷ [Domestic abuse commissioner \(2023\) strategic plan](#)

⁸ [Violence against women and girls' strategy 2021-24: call for evidence](#)

⁹ [Tackling violence against women and girls' strategy \(2021\)](#)

¹⁰ [National Police Chiefs' Council 2024 Call to action as VAWG epidemic deepens](#)

2022/2023, with suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse rising year-on-year

- 3.6. In terms of Shropshire's response to Violence Against Women and Girls, there is strong multi-agency attendance at boards including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), however the systemic response to the wider violence against women and girl's agenda in Shropshire is still very much silo led.
- 3.7. **Recommendation:** For the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to extend its reach to include Violence Against Women and Girls.
- 3.8. In 2022, The West Mercia Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) set up a Joint Strategic Sexual Abuse and Assault Board, including various stakeholders within Shropshire. In 2023, West Mercia Police appointed specialist officers to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls across policing areas.
- 3.9. Following the recommendations made in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance, Standing Together was awarded a three-year contract by the Home Office to identify and understand domestic abuse interventions across healthcare settings. The project is named 'Crossing Pathways - Integrating Best Practise within Health and Domestic Abuse'¹¹. In Shropshire, meetings are in development and will take place county-wide with partners from the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Health Trusts, Local Authority, and other VAWG/domestic abuse leads as it becomes established.
- 3.10. At the time of writing this needs assessment, Shropshire has published two Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)¹². The SSCP (2024) rationale for carrying out domestic homicide reviews includes ensuring that agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic abuse by offering and putting in place appropriate support mechanisms, procedures, resources, and interventions with an aim to avoid future incidents of domestic homicide. This rationale is in line with The Home Office (2016)¹³ rationale around domestic abuse homicide reviews.
- 3.11. The Shropshire Community Safeguarding Partnership (SSCP) have released a Domestic Abuse Homicide Learning Briefing as a way of outlining what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.

4. Commissioning priorities

- 4.1. The areas of unmet need in relation to safe accommodation and the domestic abuse response more widely, has been established by combining qualitative data analysis (with limitations) from the voice of lived experience and the stakeholder review.

¹¹ <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/crosspath>

¹² [SSCP \(2024\) Shropshire Domestic Abuse Homicide Reviews](#)

¹³ [Home Office \(2016\) Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews](#)

- 4.2. The safe accommodation provision urgently requires attention in relation to the high number of people declining or not being accepted into the current provision.
 - 4.3. Shropshire Council housing options team to urgently look at their prevent duty in relation to domestic abuse to ensure more victim/survivors are prevented from becoming homeless.
 - 4.4. To evaluate the benefit of continuing the co-location of specialist domestic abuse officers currently in Shropshire Council Housing Service and Shropshire Council Children's Services (Stepping Stones).
 - 4.5. To evaluate Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Prevention Team and assess the benefit to the wider partnership.
 - 4.6. The following priorities from the previous Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs assessment are still relevant for this needs assessment:
 - All services must prioritise working towards a true trauma informed approach that recognises multi-victimisation and how trauma impacts people's interactions with services. The accessibility of services must also be considered for those in rural areas, including where telephone reception and/or internet connection are poor.
 - The core community specialist domestic abuse service needs to be adequately funded to meet the current demand and remove the need for a waiting list. Once the service can operate effectively to meet this demand, longer term therapeutic support needs to be commissioned alongside research to understand and work to meet the needs of those who face additional barriers to accessing support due to their ethnicity, LGBTQ+, age or disability (not an exhaustive list, see section eleven).
 - Specialist domestic abuse support for children and young people is urgently required. This needs to be across all areas: children who are victims/survivors of abuse by a parent/carer/parent's partner, abuse from a sibling (including where that behaviour is directed against a parent); children who are victims/survivors of intimate partner violence; children using harmful behaviours against family members.
-

5. Methodology for Needs Assessment

- 5.1. The needs assessment is shaped and informed by the voices of those with lived experience. The Partnership must provide those with lived experience of domestic abuse continual opportunities to have first-hand involvement to share their views on service provision and to play a role in the development of services.
- 5.2. The process of this needs assessment was gender and trauma informed recognising whilst anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse 'women are considerably more likely to

be subjected to repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence¹⁴. Male victims of domestic abuse are largely invisible to society and to public services. In effect, they are not “in the system”¹⁵. Domestic abuse responses must be shaped considering differing experiences due to intersectional characteristics such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, and experiences such as mental ill-health, use of substances and poverty.

- 5.3. The needs assessment includes those who harm and use abusive behaviours, to ensure they are held accountable for abuse and the consequences of their abuse, while being offered support to change their behaviours. The needs assessment avoids language such as ‘domestic abuse relationships’ to ensure responsibility is placed where it belongs, with those causing harm, and avoids any victim-blaming language.
- 5.4. The needs assessment also recognises that children and young people are victims in their own right and ensures that they are included as a group requiring services, in addition to adult victims/survivors and perpetrators.
- 5.5. The needs assessment was completed using the following methods:
 - Gathering the views of those with lived experience
 - Reference to national research and data
 - Data requests to all services (see details below) Meetings with strategic and operational leads from statutory, voluntary and community services/departments to understand the current Shropshire response within services and in relation to partnership working and gather qualitative feedback on need, demand, barriers, and gaps.

Stakeholder involvement

- 5.6. Shropshire Council held meetings with 46 practitioners and leaders from a variety of services and organisations across statutory and voluntary sector including the local authority, health, and the criminal justice system. A further four were involved via email.
- 5.7. Meetings or email contact was attempted but unsuccessful with colleagues from: YSS Enhance Project, Shropshire Disability Network, Bright Star Boxing and Shropshire Supports Refugees.

Data collection

- 5.8. For the previous Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (2022)¹⁶ a set of data requests were created, which were not restricted to safe accommodation. For this Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment, a similar data request was sent but for the financial year 2022/23 and 2023/24. This was to gather a broad range of data, which could be comparable to the findings from the previous needs assessment to help spot patterns and trends. For services who did not provide a data return in 2022, a new set of

¹⁴ [Women's Aid \(2023\) Domestic abuse is a gendered crime](#)

¹⁵ ManKind (2021) [Making-Invisible-Men-Visible-Guide-Final.pdf \(mankind.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁶ [Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment \(2022\)](#)

data requests were created.

- 5.9. Appendix 1 identifies all services/departments who were contributors to the needs assessment, who were contacted via email to provide a data return and/or spoken to, to provide verbal feedback. The data requests were service specific, but Appendix 2 provides an example of the general data requested. Many of the services/departments were unable to provide the level of detail requested and this is discussed in more depth later in this report.
- 5.10. **Recommendation:** For all services to be involved in guiding the development of enhanced data collection around domestic abuse in Shropshire.
- 5.11. The majority of data utilised within this needs assessment is based upon data collected from April 2022 to March 2024. This is to build upon the data collected in the previous needs assessment which covered April 2020 to March 2022.
- 5.12. Throughout this process, it was highlighted that some services data systems are not able to gather some of the data requested. Therefore, there are anomalies in the data obtained, and it does not allow the needs assessment to see the paths of victims/survivors through the system. To fill this gap, qualitative data has been collected for the needs assessment from practitioners and those with lived experience.
- 5.13. In addition to the quantitative data collected, this needs assessment includes qualitative data which has been gathered from practitioners and people with lived experience of domestic abuse in Shropshire. This data is incorporated throughout the needs assessment with recommendations provided at the end of each section. Qualitative data has been provided via the Lived Experience Advisory Group and a variety of stakeholders who were asked to feedback via discussion or email in relation to this needs assessment.
- 5.14. We would like to express our sincere thanks for the data and feedback provided.

6. Voice of Lived Experience

- 6.1. 'Lived experience' relates to things a person has experienced directly which gives them expertise and understanding that others do not have. This needs assessment recognises the importance of capturing the voices of those with lived experience. The feedback obtained from individuals with lived experience of domestic abuse, provides valuable insight into the current responses to domestic abuse in Shropshire and ways in which support of victims/survivors and perpetrators in Shropshire can be improved.
- 6.2. This section provides an overview of the actions taken in this needs assessment to capture the voice of those with lived experience.

Survey 1– Homelessness lived experience and domestic abuse.

- 6.3. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) statutory guidance highlights that the experiences, needs and voices of victims and survivors must be considered when developing responses to both adult and child victims.
- 6.4. To capture the voices of victims of domestic abuse who are currently homeless, a survey was created to gather their feedback around their journey towards safe accommodation, independent living and/or seeking community support for domestic abuse.
- 6.5. Between the 20th of June and the 8th of July, the survey was available via Microsoft Forms for anyone aged 16 or over who were currently homeless in Shropshire, supported by Shropshire Council Housing Service and who has had lived experience of domestic abuse.
- 6.6. This survey was sent to the following teams at Shropshire Council housing service to circulate to their clients/customers:
- Temporary accommodation and Housing Support
 - Homelessness Operations – including HomePoint, Rough Sleeper, Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency teams
 - Housing Options
 - The Ark
- 6.7. It was recognised that this survey was an online survey. To ensure anyone could complete the survey, a printable copy was circulated with the online survey to all housing teams. This allowed any Housing Officer to print the survey out for their client and return to the Domestic Abuse Prevention Team once completed if required.
- 6.8. This survey received no responses. However, Housing Options Team confirmed they circulated a link to their team and the survey was sent out to applicants. The reason for the survey receiving no responses is unknown.

Contacting individuals with open homelessness applications

- 6.9. On the 3rd of June 2024, Shropshire Council had 156 open homelessness applications where domestic abuse was stated as the primary or secondary reason for homelessness.
- 6.10. To further involve individuals with lived experience in the needs assessment, Shropshire Council's Lived Experience Project Officer attempted to reach out to 33 clients whose housing needs were due to domestic abuse. These clients were randomly selected from a dataset comprising 156 open cases and 317 closed cases, all of whom received housing support between 2022 and 2024.
- 6.11. The Lived Experience Project Officer separated the lists into male and female applications and then randomly selected 1 case in every 20-30 cases for females and 2 out of every 10 for males. This process resulted in contacting only 1 non-UK national and 1 unknown gender, a point to consider for future selection.

6.12. The Lived Experience Project officer contacted 33 people. Please see their demographics below:

Demographics of people with homelessness applications contacted by the Lived Experience Project Officer	
Gender - Female: 21 people - Male: 11 people - Unknown: 1 person	Disability - Yes: 7 people - No: 10 people - Unknown: 16 people
Age - 19-24: 6 people - 25-34: 9 people - 35-44: 11 people - 45-54: 5 people - 55-64: 2 people	Marital status: - Single: 18 people - With a partner- 3 people - Married (but fleeing domestic abuse): 2 people - Separated: 5 people - Unknown: 5 people (but all marked as breakdown of relationship or fleeing DA/DV)
Ethnicity - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/ British: 26 people - Any other White background (Polish): 1 person - Irish: 2 people - Not stated- 4 people	Access to public funds - Yes: 32 people - Unknown: 1 person
Sexual orientation - Heterosexual: 19 people - Bisexual: 1 person - Gay: 1 person - Prefer not to say: 9 people - Unknown: 3 people	Do you have children? - No: 18 people - 1 child: 6 people - 2 children: 7 people - 3 children: 2 people

6.13. The Lived Experience Project Officer was able to engage with 5 of the 33 people contacted. Please see their demographics below:

Demographics of participants	
Gender - Female: 2 participants - Male: 3 participants	Disability - Yes: 2 participants - No: 3 participants
Age - 19-24: 1 participant - 25-34: 1 participant - 35-44: 1 participant - 45-54: 2 participants	Marital status - In a relationship: 1 participant - Single: 3 participants - Declined to answer: 1 participant
Ethnicity - White British: 5 participants	Access to public funds - Access to public funds: 5 participants

Sexual orientation - Heterosexual/Straight: 4 participants - Prefer not to say: 1 participant	Do you have children? - No: 3 participants - Yes: 2 participants have one child
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6.14. It is also important to state that the Lived Experience Project Officer also went to The Ark on Friday 5th July. They spoke to 1 male at the Ark, but they did not provide any other details.

General feedback from participants contacted:

6.15. Participants discussed a range of experiences with Shropshire Council housing officers and housing service. Some participants shared that they faced challenges with communication, lack of support plans, and transparency issues. The inconsistency in support officers' approaches was a common theme as was the need for a better understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse and “retaliation”.

6.16. One participant disclosed that:

“It feels there is no help until you are on the street, until the worst has happened if you have the right words and say the right things you get support but if it was prior to the desperate need, little support is given”.

6.17. Another participant shared that they were placed in temporary accommodation:

“The first hotel was lovely but wasn’t entirely suitable as there was no cooking facilities which meant it was costly to eat. the hotel was near a pub, where some people would approach and be suggestive ask for sex”.

6.18. Another participant said about the response they received:

“I felt like I needed to find work, but I was managing PTSD and other triggers from trauma and self-harm”.

Survey 2- Lived Experience Domestic Abuse Survey

6.19. In order to capture the voices of individuals with lived experience of domestic abuse, a general online survey for those over sixteen and residing in Shropshire with lived experience around domestic abuse was created (see Appendix 3 for overview of survey).

6.20. This survey was released from the 1st of June 2024 to the 27th of June 2024 and was circulated by the following specialist local domestic and sexual abuse services to their clients inviting them to take part:

- West Mercia Women’s Aid
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
- PEGS (Parental Educational Growth Support)

- Axis Counselling.

6.21. Shropshire Council's Lived Experience Domestic Abuse Project Officer also circulated the survey to the Lived Experience Advisory group. This group consists of individuals who have been subjected to domestic and sexual abuse in Shropshire.

Overview of Lived Experience Domestic Abuse Survey Participants

6.22. There were forty-four responses to this survey in total.

6.23. Each participant was provided with a participant information sheet and were asked to provide consent to answering the survey. Some questions in the survey were not mandatory, enabling participants to skip any questions they may have found triggering or harmful to them. This must be considered when looking at total number of responses.

6.24. Demographic details were gathered for all forty-four participants:

Participant demographics	
Gender - Female: 38 participants - Male: 3 participants - Not answered: 3 participants	Disability - Yes: 11 participants - No: 31 participants - Prefer not to say: 2 participants
Age - 25-34: 7 participants - 35-44: 14 participants - 45-54: 14 participants - 55-64: 6 participants - 65-74 :2 participants - 75-85+:1 participant	Marital status - Married/Civil partnership: 2 participants - With partner: 3 participants - Single: 18 participants - Separated: 11 participants - Divorced/ legally dissolved: 9 participants - Prefer not to say: 1 participant
Ethnicity - White/White British: 42 participants - Asian/ Asian Mixed: 1 participant - Mixed: 1 participant	Access to public funds* - Yes: 7 participants - No: 21 participants - Don't know: 16 participants
Sexual orientation - Heterosexual/Straight: 43 participants - Other: 1 participant	Do you have children? - Yes: 38 participants - No: 5 participants - Prefer not to say: 1 participant

*The survey did not define public funds, which must be considered as some survivors may have interpreted the question differently than others.

6.25. The 38 participants who disclosed they had children were asked to share the ages of the children. They were able to select more than one age.

Age of children	Number of children
Pregnant	0

0-4 years	10
5-10 years	11
11-14 years	13
15-17 years	11
Adults	17

6.26. It is important when looking at the survey results to consider the survey was not completed by:

- Anyone whose gender was Transgender, nonbinary, or other.
- Anyone whose ethnicity was Gypsy/Roma/Traveller or Black/Black British.
- Anyone whose sexual orientation was gay/lesbian or bisexual.
- Anyone who was aged between 16-24 years old or aged 85+.

6.27. It is also recognised that a question was not asked in relation to the participants socio-economic status. Identifying this is important for developing appropriate resources and interventions.

6.28. **Recommendation:** If surveys are used for the next Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs assessment, ensure the survey collects information around participants socio-economic status.

Tenure Type of participants when fled from/seeking support

6.29. To help shape and inform the domestic abuse needs assessment, it was important to capture responses from those with lived experience of domestic abuse around their journey towards safe accommodation. Participants were asked what type of housing tenure they were residing in before they fled/when seeking support:

Tenure Type (fled from/when seeking support)	Number of participants
Co- Homeowner with abusive Partner	13
Lived with abusive partner who was the homeowner	7
Homeowner (alone, not with abusive partner)	3
Private Rental tenant	12
Living with family since fleeing	1
Council tenant	3
Housing association tenant	3
Street Homeless/Sofa Surfing	0
Other: Army Accommodation	1

6.30. The most common tenure type was a co-homeowner with abusive partner, followed by private rental tenant. There were no participants with a tenure type of street homeless/sofa surfing.

6.31. **Recommendation:** To consider how we can improve our engagement with victims of domestic abuse who are street homeless/sofa surfing for future needs assessment work,

to ensure we are gaining their feedback to help shape and inform the needs assessment.

- 6.32. According to Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (2020)¹⁷ Victim/survivors need access to a number of pathways to secure stable and safe housing. They may also need options for both remaining in their existing home and relocating to new accommodation.
- 6.33. Participants were asked whether they needed to leave their home to flee domestic abuse:

24 participants
needed to leave
their home

20 participants
did not need to
leave their home

Participants who had contact with Shropshire Council Housing support

- 6.34. There were 8 participants of the survey who identified that they had been supported by Shropshire Council's housing service, 3 identified that they have been supported by the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme. In terms of participants who accessed Shropshire Council Housing Service, they were asked to identify which service they used.
- 5 participants used HomePoint
 - 1 participant used Housing Options.
 - 1 participant used housing support
 - 1 participant used Temporary Accommodation.
- 6.35. Two participants had positive experiences with Housing Teams and felt they were guided in the right direction. One participant suggested that housing teams could improve by assisting in finding temporary homes.
- 6.36. Feedback from participants supported by HomePoint highlighted the need for quicker allocation of safe homes to domestic abuse survivors. Despite supporting letters, the HomePoint process took 9-10 months, during which the perpetrator was aware of their location.

Participants Feedback for Shropshire Council Housing Support:

- Clear information on domestic abuse support should be easily accessible on the website.
- Staff should increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse beyond physical violence.
- A trauma-informed approach is essential, avoiding repeated explanations from survivors.
- Housing teams should recognize fleeing individuals as homeless due to safety concerns.
- Housing Staff must listen to survivors earlier to any disclosures of domestic abuse and provide greater support, taking domestic abuse more seriously.
- Exploring more appropriate, low-cost accommodation options for survivors of domestic abuse is essential, considering the high cost of rent even in refuge settings.

¹⁷ DAHA (2020) [Whole Housing Approach Year One Report](#)

- 6.37. **Recommendation:** For the Shropshire Council Housing Service to review their domestic abuse pages available to the public to ensure that it is easily accessible and includes all necessary information
- 6.38. **Recommendation:** For a domestic abuse training plan to be put together that all Shropshire Council Housing Teams must complete. Part of the plan will be to undertake regular refresher training once all modules have been completed.

Seeking Domestic Abuse Support – Specialist Services

- 6.39. To design policy and commission services that meet the needs of victims of domestic abuse, it is vital to understand how the victims in our sample sought support and which organisation they sought help from.
- 6.40. It is important to consider this when looking at the survey results. Participants of this survey were asked which domestic abuse service they accessed for support; in the first instance they were only able to select one service:

Domestic abuse service	Number of participants who accessed support
West Mercia Women's Aid	2
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	36
PEGS	0
Axis Counselling	0
Other:	
SAFFA	1
Axis Independent Sexual Violence Advisor	1
New Era	1
None	1

- 6.41. Participants were then asked a series of questions in relation to the support they received from the identified service.
- 6.42. Participants were then asked to identify any other service they have been supported by, which can be shown in the blank survey template (see Appendix 3).
- 6.43. The table below shows any other domestic abuse service participants accessed support from:

Domestic abuse service	Number of participants who accessed support
West Mercia Women's Aid	9
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	15
PEGS	0
Axis Counselling	2
Not applicable	8
Other	2

Support Participants Received From Domestic Abuse Services

- 6.44. All participants were asked the type of support they are/have accessed from the domestic abuse services which is shown in the table below

Domestic abuse service	Support received with numbers of participants
West Mercia Women's Aid	- IDVA service – 4 participants - Children and Young People – 1 participant - 24-hour helpline - 5 participants
Axis Counselling	- Trauma Focused Counselling – 1 participant
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	- Refuge- 3 participants. - Outreach Support- 11 participants - Groups – 21 participants - Phone Support – 1 participant

- 6.45. Participants who identified they were supported through refuge were asked their current situation regarding refuge
- 2 participants of the survey were currently being supported in refuge
 - 1 participant left refuge due to purchasing a house.
- 6.46. Participants were asked if they are currently being supported by a domestic abuse service.
- 11 participants shared that they were being supported at the time of completing the survey
 - 7 participants disclosed that they were not currently being supported
 - 25 participants did not answer.

Overview of Participant Feedback Around Specialist Services

- 6.47. Feedback from participants is incorporated in this report, the headlines are included in this section. It is important to note, that there are gaps and limitations to the survey, we would've liked to have seen a greater diversity and sample in relation to ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and immigration status for example.
- 6.48. The findings from the voices of those with lived experience align with our findings elsewhere, most importantly participants said that they want to be provided with all the available options.

Overview of Participant Feedback Around Accessing Support

- 6.49. **Accessing Help from Agencies:**
- 43% of participants (19) answered that accessing help from agencies was “easy”.
 - The remaining 25 participants shared their experience of getting help from agencies. Many participants stated that once they knew what help was available, accessing support became easier. One participant mentioned that reporting to the police facilitated their access to agency support.
 - However, some participants have found the process time-consuming and challenging. One participant initially found accessing support daunting due to the multitude of support numbers available.

- Some participants prior to leaving their home, found accessing support difficult. One participant shared that:

“I found it extremely difficult to tap into the agencies due to the fact that I was serving military and didn't require the help of additional services such as housing”

6.50. **Support Plans and Reviews:**

- 23 participants felt that their support plans and ongoing reviews met their needs.
- 21 participants provided feedback around their support plans and ongoing reviews. Whilst some participants shared, they felt their support plans were adequate, they emphasized the need for more follow-up. For instance, one disabled participant said:

“In some ways it (the support plan) met my needs but as I am disabled there were lots of things, I required further support with but had no one to help me for quite some time.”

- Some participants felt that their support plans fell short. One participant reported not having a support plan.
- Another participant highlighted the absence of available counselling, which would have been beneficial.

Feedback from participants- support services

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service:

- 6.51. 9 participants shared they found it easy to access help from Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service. However, some participants provided feedback around the wait to receive outreach support.

- 6.52. There were a number of positive comments around the support participants received by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service with one participant sharing that their support worker was dependable and always got back to them when they needed support. One participant said that Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service were “easy to understand” and showed “immeasurable kindness and empathy” whilst another participant shared that they finally felt heard after 19 years. One participant highlighted that Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service helped connect them with counselling services and helped them to get a diagnosis for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

“Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service have been brilliant, but it took me years to find that they existed. As a middle-aged white male victim of Domestic Abuse and the perpetrator being a teacher in Telford and Wrekin, most authorities/support services were not interested in listening to my case. SDAS did, they have helped and supported me enormously, they continue to do so. I genuinely believe that without the support of SDAS, I would've succeeded in taking my own life in 2023 after 19 years of domestic abuse at the hands of my ex-wife. Thank you SDAS, they are brilliant”

- 6.53. A number of participants who attended Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service groups were complimentary, sharing that attending groups has been helpful to them, enabling them to build confidence and make friendships with others. One participant found attending groups helped to tackle the feeling of isolation.

Groups have “given me a new perspective of my experiences, helping me understand what domestic abuse is and how I had experienced more than I thought. At the end of my support plan, I was left feeling educated and motivated to use my experience to help others.”

- 6.54. However, one participant shared that accessing outreach support was difficult as support ran through normal working hours and the participant couldn't afford time off work, due to supporting themselves and their child.
- 6.55. A common theme was around the lack of staff in refuge and staff being stretched. One participant shared that accessing refuge was a straightforward process and received a lot of support however, they shared that there is not enough staff in refuge and staff are “stretched too thin, you can see the impact on them”.

West Mercia Women's Aid:

- 6.56. One participant provided feedback that their first contact was with West Mercia Women's Aid when they fled from another area. They shared the support they received from West Mercia Women's Aid was provided quickly and was efficiently.
- 6.57. Another participant shared that West Mercia Women's Aid and Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service made a positive impact on their life in terms of leaving a 30+ years, very dangerous situation safely and has helped their recovery.

West Mercia Police:

- 6.58. One participant shared that the police signposted them to domestic abuse support services. Another participant highlighted that once they reported the crime to the police, they found it easier to access support but prior to that it was hard to get support before leaving. However, one participant shared that they did not find it easy at all as they shared, they did not find the police very proactive.

Axis Counselling:

- 6.59. One participant shared that their Axis worker was “amazing” and that they couldn't ask for someone more supportive.

Participants were asked if any of the support they are receiving/have previously received made a positive difference to their lives

- 6.60. Many participants disclosed that they have come a long way due to the support they received. Participants also shared that through accessing support, they felt heard which

has been extremely positive.

- 6.61. Participants also shared that the support they have received changed their life, with one participant sharing that having someone listen and advise how to navigate through the process of divorce and cope with child contact through post separation abuse, has kept them alive.

“The support I received, although not always at the most crucial points, was also completely invaluable. I was so brainwashed when I first came away, I really didn't understand the scale of the abuse I had endured...I felt so much stronger for putting my case out there and hope that if nothing else it can be used in the future to help any future victims of my abusers”

- 6.62. A number of participants have shared that the support they received has helped with their mental health. One participant shared the support they received has helped with their self-confidence, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Another participant shared that the support they have received has “been instrumental” and as a result they have been able to move back into their family home. They have been able to have a non-molestation order put in place and received a ring doorbell which helps them to manage their anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Participants were asked if any of the support they have received, had a negative impact on their life

- 6.63. 72% of participants shared that the support they have received has not had a negative impact on their lives.
- 6.64. Some participants however, shared there had been a negative impact. Examples of participants negative experiences include, key worker not attending court sessions, appointment scheduling errors and language used by professionals. One participant shared that a professional used derogatory language around their parenting, which triggered them to have panic attacks and depression.
- 6.65. One participant shared the lack of support they received within the Army had a negative impact on their life. Not knowing how to leave or access support meant they stayed for longer.
- 6.66. One participant mentioned there will be a negative impact on their life when support sessions end. Another participant shared that the length of time it takes to get the support needed, can have a negative impact.
- 6.67. Another participant shared that the Police not arresting their ex-partner after breaking the restraining order and police bail conditions, had a negative impact on their life.

Participants were asked ‘How can we improve the domestic abuse response in Shropshire?’.

- 6.68. The feedback from participants around how we can improve the domestic abuse response in Shropshire is summarised below.
- 6.69. **Improving Understanding and Awareness:**
- Enhance understanding of domestic abuse within Shropshire. This includes training staff on cultural nuances and how abuse manifests across different forms, not just physical violence.
 - Everyone involved in a supporting role should understand the processes of each service to improve the domestic abuse response.
 - More emphasis on raising awareness and breaking stigma around domestic abuse in Shropshire.
 - Needs to be better responses to families, ensuring safety and providing accommodation options.
- 6.70. **Enhancing Service Responses:**
- Services offering support must ensure that main numbers and helplines are always answered promptly.
 - Larger teams of domestic abuse support workers so they can distribute workloads effectively.
 - Collaboration between police and domestic abuse services is crucial to provide comprehensive support and information at every step of the process.
 - Addressing waiting times for support is essential to ensure timely assistance for victims of domestic abuse.
 - Consider having a family court support worker, specialising in domestic abuse in Shropshire.
- 6.71. **Funding and Support Provision:**
- Increased funding and longer contracts for service providers. Continuity is vital, especially when survivors must repeatedly recount traumatic events.
 - Access to support should extend beyond major towns like Shrewsbury and Telford.
 - Improving refuge provision involves assessing survivor compatibility and considering bedsits with communal spaces as an accommodation option.
- 6.72. **Tailored Support and Mental Health Services:**
- Some participants shared that having a designated mental health support worker, for domestic abuse survivors in Shropshire would be beneficial. One participant shared that having a mental health worker would create stability. Therefore, in order to improve domestic abuse response in Shropshire, designated mental health support workers, along with routine appointments would enhance the overall domestic abuse response.
 - Tailored support is essential, especially for disabled individuals fleeing domestic abuse. A buddy service can aid the transition to independence.
 - Providing funds to victims can boost confidence and empowerment.
- 6.73. At the end of both surveys' participants were provided with the Lived Experience Project Officers contact number and email and were given an opportunity to share their details for the project officer to contact them to discuss them joining the Lived Experience Advisory Group' and helping to shape the services that are there to support them. 25 participants expressed interest in joining the group.

Focus Groups.

6.74. As part of capturing the voice of lived experience, Shropshire Council carried out two focus group sessions with survivors residing in refuge.

Overview of Participants:

6.75. Five participants were interviewed, recruited by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS). All five participants, at the point of the focus groups, were residing in refuge.

6.76. Demographic details were collected for all five participants shown below:

Participant demographics	
Age: - 20-23: 1 participant - 25-34: 3 participants - 45-54: 1 participant	Disability - No: 5 participants
Gender - Female: 5 participants	Marital status - Single: 3 participants - Separated: 1 participant - Divorced/ legally dissolved: 1 participant
Ethnicity - 4 White/White British: 4 participants - Gypsy/Roma/Traveller: 1 participant	Access to public funds* - Yes: 4 participants - Don't know: 1 participant
Sexual orientation - Heterosexual/Straight: 5 participants	Do you have children? - Yes: 3 participants - Prefer not to say: 2 participants

6.77. Before entering Shropshire's refuge, 4 participants were living out of county and 1 shared they were previously a tenant of a Connexus property in Shropshire.

Overview of feedback from focus groups:

6.78. Understanding Available Support:

- One participant emphasised that while available support options were discussed with them, it can be challenging to absorb all the information.
- Another participant emphasized the need for greater awareness about what a refuge is and how to access support.

6.79. Issues with Temporary Accommodation:

- Participants shared their experiences of being placed in B&B accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse. They found these environments unsuitable. One participant shared that they witnessed sex work and encountering unsavoury characters can be

distressing for survivors and their children. Participants highlighted that Safer housing options are crucial to protect vulnerable individuals and families.

- Hotels where survivors are placed should prioritize family-oriented settings.

6.80. Isolation and Keeping Children Occupied:

- Participants shared that they felt isolated in temporary accommodation.
- Feedback included managing children's entertainment in cramped spaces with limited funds is challenging.
- Suggestions included ensuring those fleeing domestic abuse, who are placed in temporary accommodation could receive vouchers for soft play areas and providing breakfast.

6.81. Positive Experiences with Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service:

- Two participants praised the support provided by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service. With one participant sharing that they were helped with medication prescriptions and supported mental health needs.

6.82. Challenges in Refuge Settings:

- Participants highlighted the difficulties of navigating refuge rules and parenting in shared facilities with multiple families.

6.83. Recommendations in Light of Focus Groups:

- When a victim/survivor (and any accompanying children) is placed in temporary accommodation, an appropriately trained Housing Support Officer is assigned to provide support within 48 hours. The support should be focused on reducing isolation, access to food, improving awareness of local amenities, and should be delivered in a trauma informed way.
- Before placing a victim/survivor in temporary accommodation, the local authority must carry out necessary checks to assure itself of the suitability and safety of the building and its surrounding environment.

6.84. Recommendations on Involving Those with Lived Experience:

- Involve those with lived experience in the design, evaluation, and review of specialist service provision and processes.
- Involve those with lived experience in the development of responses, processes, and training for non-domestic abuse specialist professionals.
- To ensure the diversity of survivor involvement, work with voluntary and community services including 'by and for' services working with or representing (not an exhaustive list) minoritized ethnic groups, older people, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities e.g., A4U, SAND, the Gypsy, Roma Traveller Team, and others.

7. Needs Assessment Findings

- 7.1. This section presents findings from the quantitative data gathering described in the methodology section above. It needs to be read with reference to the gaps and limitations outlined in section four.

- 7.2. Following this section, data is presented specifically on safe accommodation (sections seven, eight and nine). Sections ten and eleven present data on access to non-accommodation-based specialist domestic abuse services (ten), and partner responses and provision (eleven), including any additional data available from those services.
- 7.3. When highlighting gaps in provision, it should be noted that in 2023 the Domestic Abuse Commissioner¹⁸ presented key findings around specialist services in England and Wales. These included:
- Specialist services are effective in enabling victims and survivors to feel safer and more in control of their lives following abuse.
 - Support provided for victims/survivors from minoritized communities varied, with services least likely to have specialist provision for Deaf victims/survivors or victims/survivors with learning disabilities.
 - A considerable injection of long-term funding is needed for services to meet the demand for support from survivors.
 - Proactive outreach by domestic abuse services and by wider public services was critical in enabling victims and survivors to access support.

Shropshire Population Data

- 7.4. The statistics provided below in relation to Shropshire population data were sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹⁹ census data, which was captured in 2021 unless otherwise specified. It is important to note that there may have been changes in relation to Shropshire's population since the data was released.
- 7.5. In 2021, Shropshire had a population of 323,619. The population is distributed across most of the county.
- 7.6. Appendix 4¹⁷ shows the proportion of Shropshire residents by gender and age groups in Shropshire. There are a total of 163,927 females and 159,692 males. The highest percent age band was 55-59 years at 7.9% with the lowest percent age band being 90 and over.
- 7.7. Therefore, within Shropshire there are more females than males. The age of Shropshire's population is not distributed evenly across the county, with higher numbers of children and young people in central Shropshire.
- 7.8. In relation to the Ethnicity of Shropshire residents 96.7% of Shropshire residents identified their ethnic group as 'White'. Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh were the second largest ethnic group at 1.3% of the population.

Barriers to Accessing Support in Shropshire Due to its Rurality.

- 7.9. Shropshire is a large predominantly rural inland County situated in the West Mercia region. It is the second largest inland rural county in England. Approximately 52.7% of the

¹⁸ [Domestic abuse commissioner \(2023\) A Patchwork of Provision How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales](#)

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census

population live in rural areas. According to the Rural Crime Network (2019)²⁰ abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas.

- 7.10. The rural crime network reports that rural victims are half as likely as urban areas to report their abuse. It could be argued that the more rural you live, the more challenging it is to access services to get support. Therefore, when considering Shropshire's domestic abuse service provision, the rural nature of Shropshire must be considered.

8. National Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

- 8.1. Understanding the national prevalence of domestic abuse can be challenging due to domestic abuse often being hidden and many incidents are not reported. However, data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW (2023)) provides some insight into the issue.
- 8.2. The CSEW (2023)²¹ estimated that 2.1 million people aged 16 years and over (1.4 million women and 751,000 men) experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023.
- 8.3. It should be noted that the CSEW (2023), in line with the statutory definition of domestic abuse, counts 'any incident' of domestic abuse. This has the potential to capture one-off conflict situations in relationships that do not have an underlying dynamic of control and coercion from one party to another, which is more likely to lead to victims needing services.
- 8.4. The data provided by the CSEW (2023) is based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using this data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

9. Local prevalence of domestic abuse

- 9.1. Domestic abuse related incidents and crimes in those aged 16 or over are recorded by the police. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)²² collect this metric and include it in their Public Health profiles.
- 9.2. For this metric, domestic abuse related offences and incidents are defined as threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) between people aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Offences have been recorded as a crime,

²⁰ [National rural crime network \(2019\) Capital and Controlled. Domestic Abuse in rural areas](#)

²¹ [Crime Survey in England and Wales \(2023\)](#)

²² [The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities \(OHID\) Fingertips data](#)

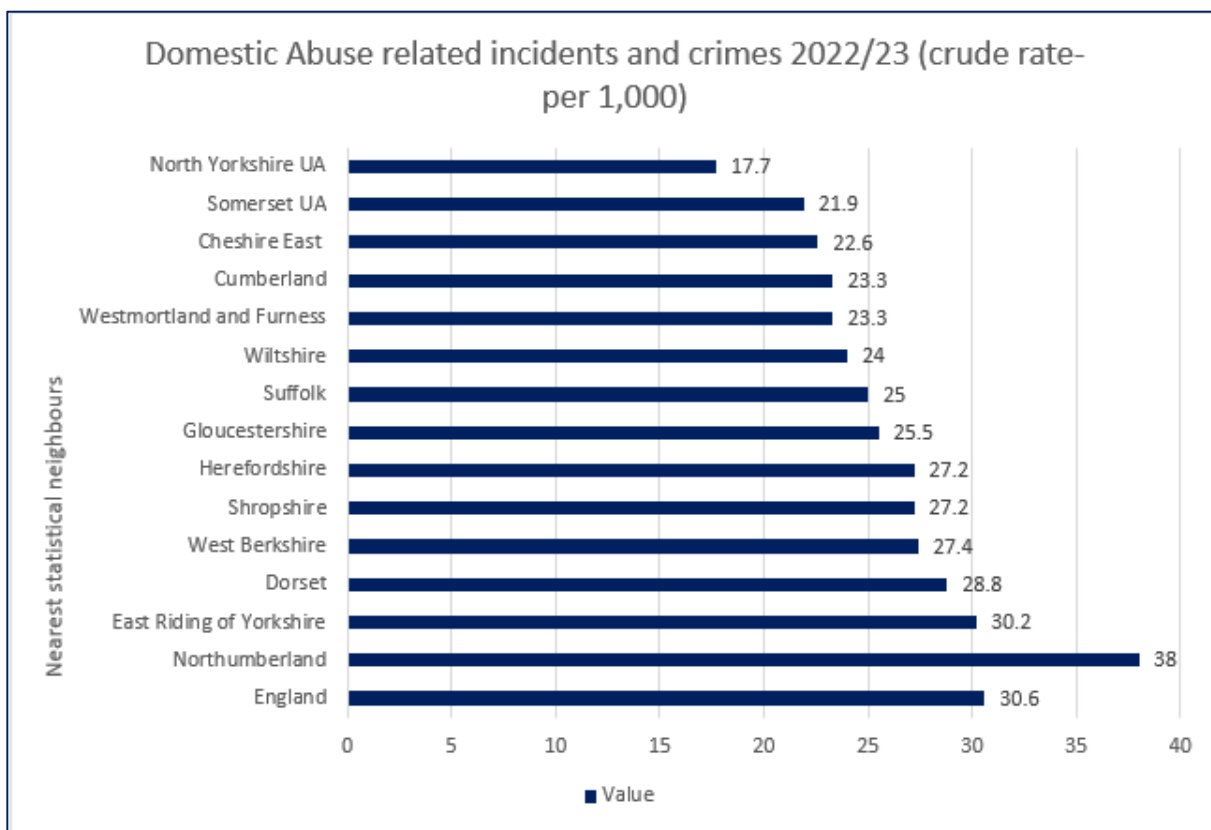
whereas the number of incidents refers to those that were not recorded as a crime and the two categories are mutually exclusive to avoid duplicate counting.

- 9.3. The table below displays the rates of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded in 2022/23 for Shropshire and other local authorities in the West Midlands region (OHID Fingertips 2024). The Shropshire rate of 27.2 per 1,000 population. Therefore, for every 1,000 people aged 16+ in Shropshire during 2022/23, almost 27 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes were reported. The Shropshire rate is joint 2nd lowest in the West Midlands region out of 14 local authority areas (range from 24.5 per 1,000 to 41.0 per 1,000) and observationally lower than the West Midlands average domestic abuse related incidents and crime rate of 35.1 per 1.000 population.

Area	Recent trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	↑	1,365,149	30.6	30.6	30.7
West Midlands region (statistical)	↑	169,002	35.1	35.0	35.3
Wolverhampton	-	-	41.0	-	-
Walsall	-	-	41.0	-	-
Solihull	-	-	41.0	-	-
Sandwell	-	-	41.0	-	-
Dudley	-	-	41.0	-	-
Coventry	-	-	41.0	-	-
Birmingham	-	-	41.0	-	-
Stoke on Trent	-	-	41.0	-	-
Staffordshire	-	-	25.6	-	-
Worcestershire	-	-	27.2	-	-
Telford and Wrekin	-	-	27.2	-	-
Shropshire	-	-	27.2	-	-
Herefordshire	-	-	27.2	-	-
Warwickshire	-	-	24.5	-	-

- 9.4. The chart below displays the rates of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded in 2022/23 for Shropshire and nearest statistical neighbours that have a similar

demographic and/or geographic profile to Shropshire, (OHID Fingertips 2024).



- 9.5. For Shropshire, this rate was 27.2 incidents per 1,000 people. This rate is joint 5th highest out of 14 statistical neighbour local areas (range 17.7 per 1,000 to 38 per 1,000) but is observationally lower than the England average rate of 30.6 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes per 1000 over the same period.
- 9.6. In turn, Shropshire is one of the lowest rates in 2022/23 for the West Midlands, but is the 5th highest compared to statistical neighbours out of 14 local authority areas. This highlights an issue for Shropshire and conversations as to why this rate may be higher than statistical neighbours despite being lower to the region.

10. Prevalence of Domestic Abuse – West Mercia Police Force Area

- 10.1. According to the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)²³ domestic abuse remains one of biggest demands on policing, with arrests for domestic abuse related offences increasing by over 22% in the year ending March 2023, compared to the previous period. The NPCC recognises that this is a positive shift but acknowledges that this is only the

²³ <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/call-to-action-as-violence-against-women-and-girls-epidemic-deepens-1>

start and there is still more to do.

- 10.2. Below presents the findings from the CSEW (2023)²⁴ and includes the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police and percentage of offences that were domestic abuse-related, by police force area.

Area	Geography	Total number of domestic abuse-related crimes Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Percentage of all crimes that were domestic abuse-related Apr 2022 to Mar 2023
England and Wales excluding Devon and Cornwall	Country	889,918	16.2
West Midlands	Region	112,607	18.7
West Mercia	Police force area	17,204	18.1

- 10.3. The percentage of all crimes that were domestic abuse related between April 2022 to March 2023 for West Mercia was 18.1%. This was 1.9% higher than England and Wales (excluding Devon and Cornwall).
- 10.4. West Mercia Police provided a breakdown of domestic abuse incidences and offences-Shropshire 2022-2024

Total for 2022/23	Total for 2023/24
Offences 3,360	Offences 3,019
Incidents 4,116	Incidents 4,161

Data Provided by West Mercia Police

- 10.5. To better understand the prevalence of domestic abuse in Shropshire, the needs assessment requested data from West Mercia Police for the same timeframe as all other data requests. However, they only provided summary reports for domestic abuse in Shropshire for **quarter four (January - March) of 2022/23 and 2023/24** unless otherwise stated. This means that offences that were committed outside this period are not included.
- 10.6. This data is limited by the quality and consistency of information input by officers at the time of recording. Not all causation factors are recorded and therefore not known for all offences, which causes this data to be limited.
- 10.7. It is important to consider that crime data is reliant on public reporting of offences. Some offence groups are known to be under reported. Also, victim to suspect relationship is not always recorded and volumes for this are therefore lower than the recorded number of

²⁴ [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(2023\) Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

offences.

- 10.8. The data provided shows there was a slight decrease in the volume of domestic abuse offences and incidences between 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, when looking at statistics around domestic abuse, it is important to consider under-reporting. Women's Aid (2022)²⁵ suggest that survivors may not report abuse to police due to reasons such as; uncertainty around what is a crime, fear of not being believed and concerns about the impact on any children.
- 10.9. It is also vital to consider the changes made in how police recorded domestic abuse crimes in 2023. As a result of the Policing Productivity Review (2023)²⁶, recommendations by the National Police Chiefs Council and the Home Office, changes have been implemented to the Counting Rules, the mechanism used by police forces across England and Wales to record crime. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner²⁷ explains that previously most police forces recorded a maximum of two crime incidents when a victim made a report to the police, regardless of whether more than two different crimes had taken place. As a result of these changes, only one incident - that is deemed to be the most serious crime - is recorded by the police due to the implementation of the 'Principal Crime Rule'. Additional changes to the rules have also allowed the police to stop counting malicious communication crimes –crimes of threatening or abusive messages – and public order offences. More officers than before are also permitted to remove a crime from the record if evidence suggests no crime took place.
- 10.10. **Recommendation:** For West Mercia police to increase awareness raising around domestic abuse in terms of how to report and how to spot the signs of abuse.
- 10.11. **Recommendation:** West Mercia Police to be specific on how domestic abuse is recorded on their system, to improve data recording and data collection.

Domestic Abuse Offences in Shropshire

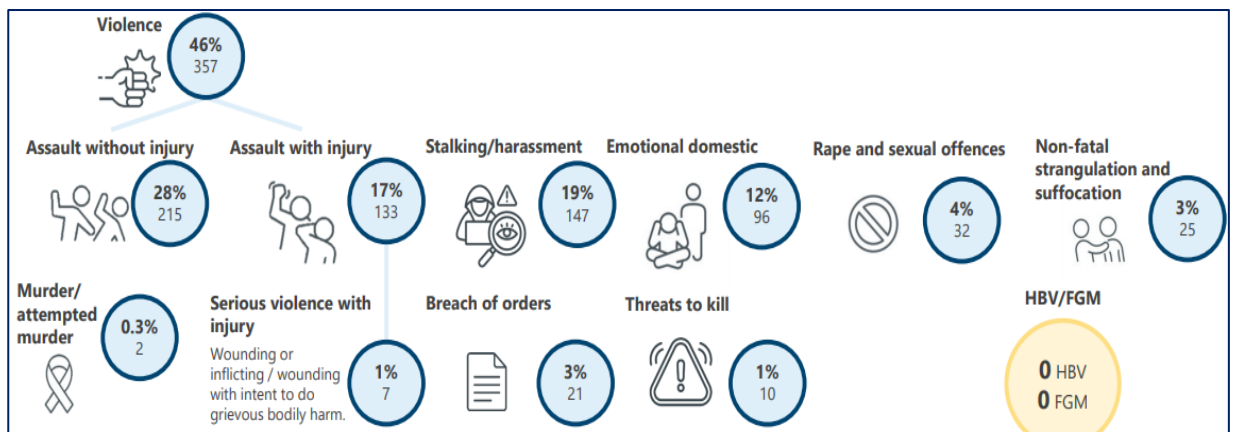
- 10.12. West Mercia Police provided a domestic abuse offence type breakdown for quarter 4 of 2022/23 and quarter 4 of 2023/24 shown below:

Q4 2022/23*

²⁵ [Women's Aid \(2022\) Come Together to End Domestic Abuse: a survey of UK attitudes to domestic abuse 2022](#)

²⁶ [Home Office \(2023\) Policing Productivity Review](#)

²⁷ [Domestic abuse Commissioner \(2024\) briefing from the domestic abuse commissioner for England and Wales Home Office Counting Rules](#)



Q4 2023/24*



- 10.13. The findings from Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24 suggest that the most common domestic abuse offence in Shropshire is assault without injury. This is followed by assault with injury. There has been a noticeable increase in serious violence with injury and a slight increase in stalking and harassment offences. However, not all offence types are covered and those presented involve offences with greatest volume and harm.
- 10.14. When discussing offences, we note that in Q4 2022/23 there were no offences recorded for Honour Based Abuse (HBV) or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). However, in Q4 2023/24 there were two offences of Honour Based Violence recorded.
- 10.15. It is unknown as to whether the victim/survivors identified by West Mercia Police, accessed, or were referred or signposted to any specialist support around Honour Based Abuse in Shropshire.
- 10.16. **Recommendation:** To understand the scope of honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation in Shropshire.
- 10.17. **Recommendation:** Consider commissioning services to support victims of stalking/harassment

Victim and Suspect Demographics – West Mercia Police

- 10.18. The police provided victim and suspect demographics for quarter four 2022/23 and quarter four 2023/24, shown below. Unfortunately, gender is not always recorded by those inputting offence details to the system, and therefore the gender breakdown won't always be complete. Anything outside of this will be 'unknown', 'unspecified' or 'blank' and has not been included.

Victims of domestic abuse			
Snapshot	Female	Male	Total number of victims in time period
Q4 2022/23	347	99	449
Q4 2023/24	303	109	415

Suspects of domestic abuse			
Snapshot	Female	Male	Total number of suspects in time period
Q4 2022/23	108	326	434
Q4 2023/24	63	155	220

- 10.19. In line with national figures, during Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24, the majority of victims in Shropshire were female, and the majority of suspects in Shropshire were male.

- 10.20. Below shows a breakdown of repeat victims and suspects of domestic abuse for Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24, with a breakdown of gender.

Repeat victims of domestic abuse			
Snapshot	Female	Male	Total number of repeat victims in time period
Q4 2022/23	47	5	52
Q4 2023/24	48	10	58

Repeat suspects of domestic abuse			
Snapshot	Female	Male	Total for number of repeat suspects in time period
Q4 2022/23	16	11	27
Q4 2023/24	10	21	31

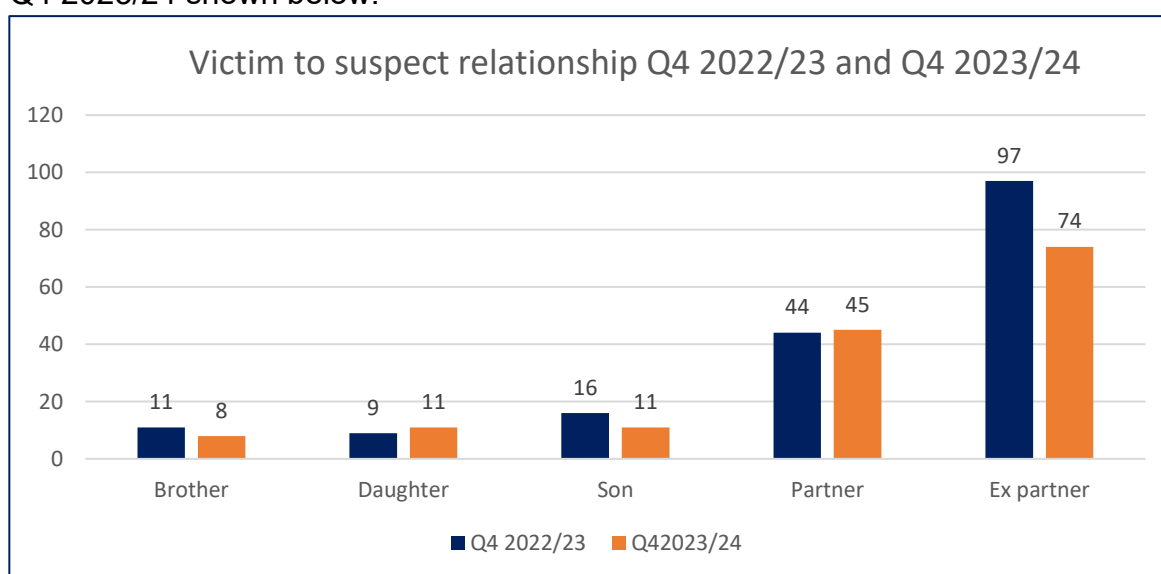
- 10.21. The number of repeat suspects and victims was higher in quarter 4 2023/24 than quarter 4 2022/23. It is noteworthy that female repeat suspects were higher than males in 2022/23.

- 10.22. **Recommendation:** For all services, as well as police, to look at how they record domestic abuse, to ensure that demographics such as gender of victim/survivors and gender of suspects can be reported on.

- 10.23. **Recommendation:** A need to review intervention methods of domestic abuse within Shropshire, to reduce the number of repeat victims and suspects.

Victim to Suspect Relationship

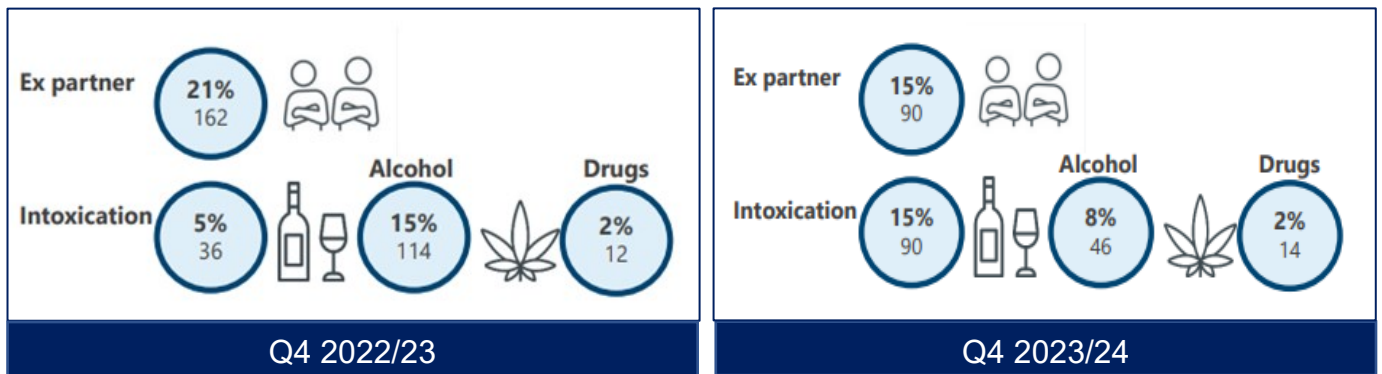
10.24. The Police provided data around the victim to suspect relationships for Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24 shown below:



10.25. The data highlighted that the most common victim to suspect relationship is ex-partner. Nationally domestic abuse is recognised as behaviour, in many cases, by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It should be noted that the data provided was only around the highest volume recorded victim to suspect relationship types and does not reflect all victim to suspect relationship types

Impact/Causation Factors of Domestic Abuse Incidents

10.26. West Mercia Police provided the impact/causation factors for domestic abuse incidents in Shropshire for quarter four 2022/23 and quarter four 2023/24 shown below: These factors above have been identified through key word searching.



10.27. The findings show an increase from Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24 of intoxication levels and drugs as an impact or causation factor and a decrease in alcohol as a causation/impact.

10.28. However, in crime reports it is not always stated what type of intoxication is present at the incident and therefore will only state 'have intoxicate' or similar. Therefore, the different use of key words used can impact the comparison of these impact/causation factors. In turn, it could be assumed that the increase in intoxication between Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24, may be due to a change in language from alcohol to intoxication.

10.29. **Recommendation:** to be able to spot patterns and trends in relation to the impact/causation factors of domestic abuse, those completing crime report must consider using the same key words, so there can be a direct comparison of causation/impact factors.

10.30. **Recommendation:** To consider how the influencing factors of domestic abuse are identified by West Mercia Police through risk assessments.

DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honor Based Violence) Risk Levels

10.31. According to Safe lives²⁸ each year more than 75,000 people in the UK are at high and imminent risk of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of domestic abuse.

In 2018, Dr Jane Monkton Smith²⁹ reviewed domestic abuse homicides in the UK and showed an eight-stage timeline of events before a homicide takes place. The 8 stages were as follows:

- A pre-relationship history of stalking or abuse by the perpetrator
- The romance develops quickly into a serious relationship

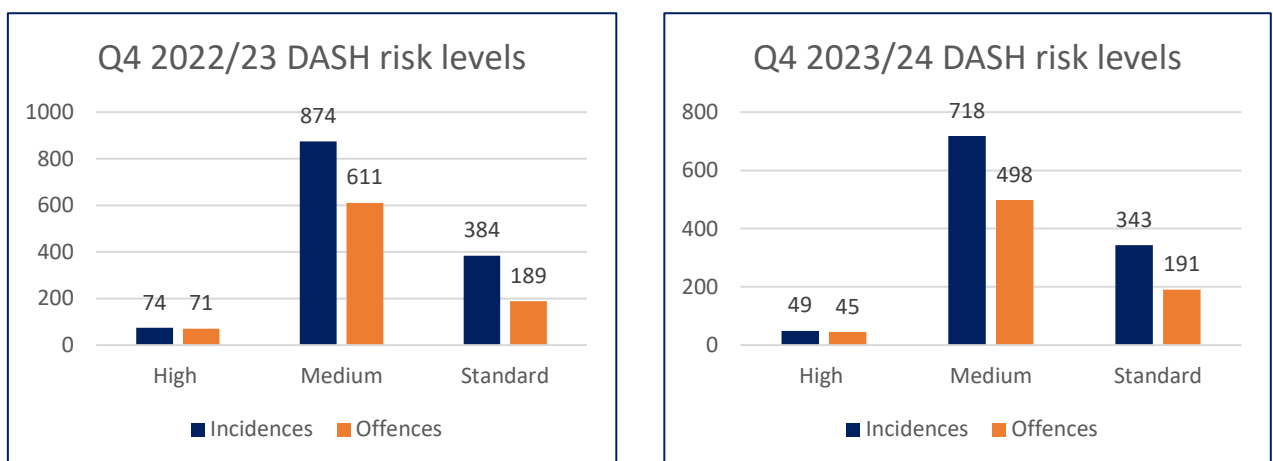
²⁸ [Safe lives \(2023\) Marac National Dataset](#)

²⁹ Monckton-Smith, Jane (2018) Intimate Partner Femicide Timeline. Accessed via: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/6273/1/Intimate%20Partner%20Femicide%20Timeline.pdf> (Accessed on 6.8.24)

- The relationship becomes dominated by coercive control
- A trigger threatens the perpetrator's control - for example, the relationship ends, or the perpetrator gets into financial difficulty
- Escalation - an increase in the intensity or frequency of the partner's control tactics, such as stalking or threatening suicide
- The perpetrator has a change in thinking - choosing to move on, either through revenge or by homicide
- Planning - the perpetrator might buy weapons or seek opportunities to get the victim alone
- Homicide - the perpetrator kills his or her partner and possibly hurts others such as the victim's children.

10.32. Risk is often identified and assessed by frontline professionals through completing a DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence Risk Assessment Tool).

10.33. West Mercia Police record the DASH risk levels of victims and provided data to the needs assessment around the number of incidences and offences with DASH risk levels high, medium, and low for Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24 shown below:

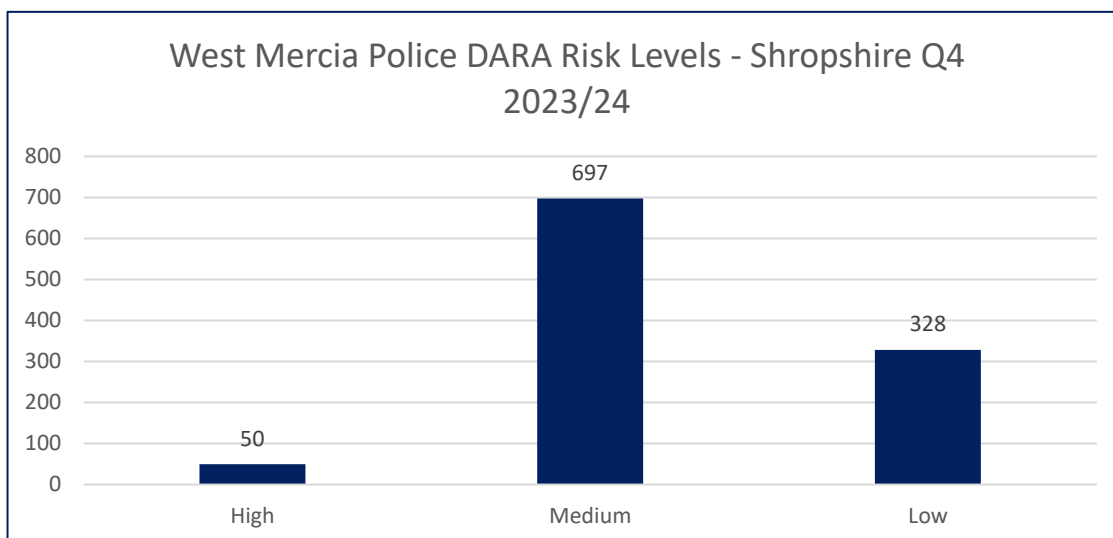


10.34. From the data provided, the number of incidences and offences recorded as a high-risk level and a medium risk has decreased between Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24.

10.35. The standard risk level has seen a slight reduction in number of incidences recorded and an increase in the number of offences. However, as previously mentioned in the needs assessment, West Mercia Police have changed the way in which they are reporting crimes, therefore the reduction in numbers, may be explained by this change.

10.36. As of October 2023, West Mercia Police replaced the DASH with the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA), which is intended to be completed by police first responders. This is discussed further in section 20.

10.37. The DARA volumes for offences have been provided for Q4 2023/24 only, as in Q4 2022/23 DASH was still in place.



10.38. The most common DARA risk level identified in Q4 2023/24 was medium risk.

West Mercia Police – Domestic Violence Orders, Notices and Disclosure

10.39. Below shows the number of domestic abuse protection orders, protection notices and disclosure scheme

West Mercia Police	Q4 2022/23	Q4 2023/24
Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)	0	5
Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs)	0	5
Domestic Violence disclosure scheme Claire's Law (DVDS)	44	75

10.40. The data provided shows an increase in the number of Domestic Violence Orders, Notices and Disclosure schemes between the two quarters. It is unclear why this is the case however a potential explanation for the increase in “Claire’s Law” applications could be as a result of the Government releasing statutory guidance in 2023³⁰.

10.41. **Recommendation:** for West Mercia Police to increase the use of DVPN/DVPOs in appropriate cases.

10.42. **Recommendation:** For West Mercia Police to consider using the Dr Jane Monkton Smith Homicide timeline in their training around domestic abuse.

11. Reporting Points

- 11.1. This section exhibits domestic abuse data from all services who provided a data return for the needs assessment. The data presented is where victims/survivors have disclosed or reported and must not be considered a full indication of prevalence of domestic abuse within Shropshire.
- 11.2. Shropshire Council requested data from 31 services/departments and received it from 30 services/departments. Data was unable to be provided by: SARC – The Glade. The reason for this is that they have transferred from G4S to Mountain Healthcare from the 1st of May 2024, and as a result they did not have access to any figures/data for 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 11.3. The range of services receiving referrals or disclosures of domestic abuse from victims/survivors and/or their children is evidence of the need for a whole system approach through the Coordinated Community Response. This requires all services to have in place: policies, procedures, mandatory training, routine/selective enquiry, well-known and clear referral pathways, case management recording with data collection and sharing with the Partnership, and active involvement with the MARAC.

Disclosures, Reporting or Referrals for Adult Victims/Survivors

Disclosures, reporting or referrals for adult victims/survivors*	2022/23	2023/24	Total 2022-2024
Axis Counselling (where DA is a factor)	294	218	512
Axis ISVA (where DA is a factor)	113	77	190
MARAC	290	287	577
Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	3	16	19
PEGS	107	184	291
SDAS- Accommodation based support	165	142	307
SDAS- Community based support	848	1069	1917
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust Accident and Emergency	109	88	197
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust Maternity	27	20	47
Shropshire Council Adult Social Care (records open with DA recorded)	271	229	500
Shropshire Council Housing Options Team (Homeless applications)	241	304	545
Victim Support	61	64	125
We are with you	344	434	778
West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA	293	303	596
West Mercia Women's Aid Hospital IDVA	72	70	142
West Mercia Women's Aid Helpline (Shropshire)	220	299	519

West Mercia Women's Aid Online contacts (Shropshire)	136	212	348
Cranstoun – Male IDVA	0	7	7
Willowdene	221	237	458

*This is taken from the breakdown of victims by gender, totalled across male and female, crimes, and incidents.

- 11.4. In addition, Citizens Advice Bureau provided the total number of domestic abuse issues, shown below

Number of domestic abuse issues – Citizens Advice Bureau	2022	2023	2024
	204	190	132

- 11.5. Also, SDAS non accommodation service received a number of “short term work” calls, in 2022/23 they received 40 calls and in 2023/24 they received 52.
- 11.6. Referrals, cases, or disclosures across nearly all services have increased since the last needs assessment. For example, Axis Counselling received 366 more referrals in this period and SDAS non accommodation services received an increase in referrals of 481.
- 11.7. The notable exception is Victim Support. There were 662 fewer referral cases or disclosures since the last needs assessment. Victim Support have shared that this might be a reporting error from the last needs assessment.

- 11.8. When analysing the data from where survivors report domestic abuse, it must be considered that this does not show the overall levels of domestic abuse. Safe Lives³¹ highlight that domestic abuse "...is much bigger than shown in official statistics, as many victims and children don't tell anyone about the abuse, and they are not recorded as crimes".

Repeat Referrals

- 11.9. Repeat referrals recorded by some specialist services, police, and MARAC

Repeat referrals for adult victims/survivors 2022/23 & 2023/24	Total number of referrals	% repeats
Axis Counselling	512	10.5%
Axis ISVA	190	11.1%
MARAC	577	40.2%
SDAS – Community based support (repeats into service not organisation)	1917	28.7%
Victim Support	125	1.6%
WM WA IDVA	596	60.6%
WM WA IDVA (Hospital)	142	27.5%

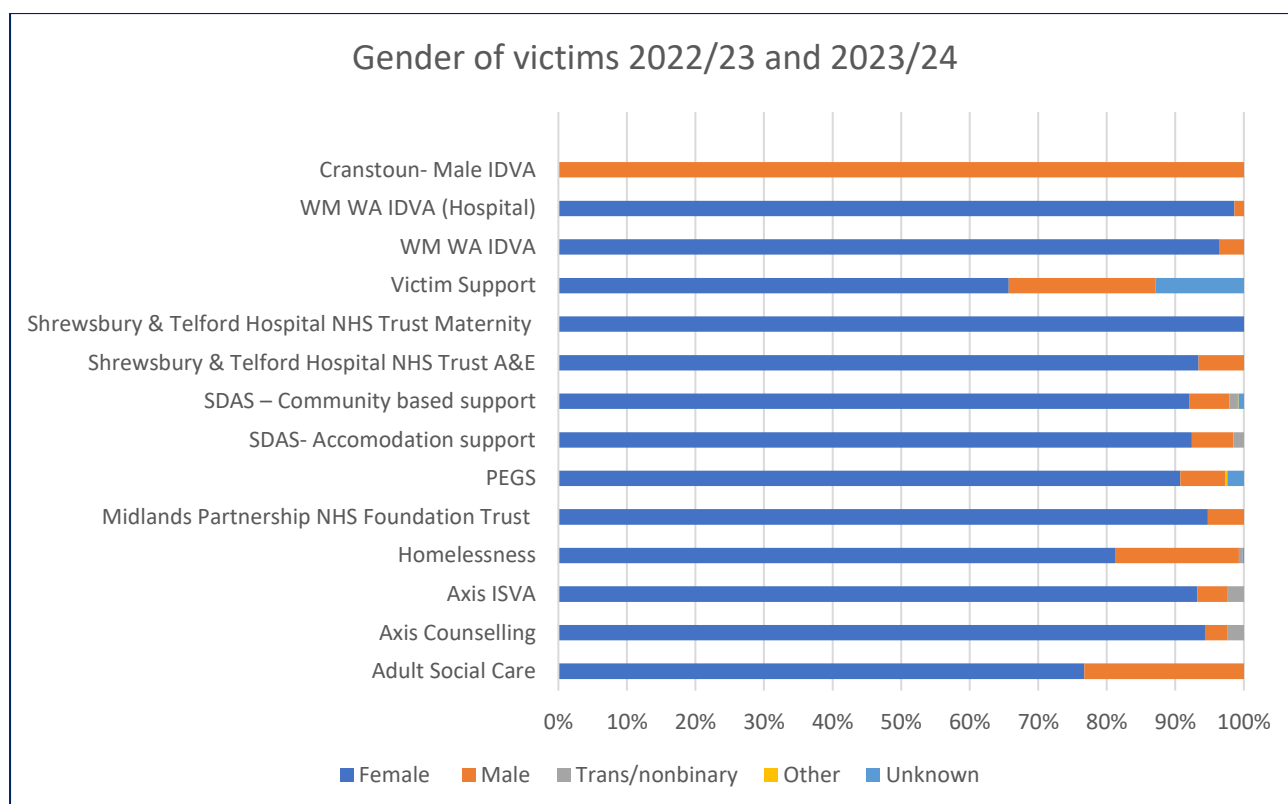
- 11.10. The service with the highest percentage of repeat referrals was West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA service. Both SDAS and WMWA have shown an increase in number of repeat referrals since the last needs assessment.
- 11.11. It is crucial to better understand the reason for repeat referrals to domestic abuse services in Shropshire.
- 11.12. **Recommendation:** For domestic abuse services to assess the reasons for repeat referrals into their service.

12. Adult Victim/Survivors

- 12.1. This section presents a summary of the data about adult victims/survivors accessing services. Included in this section are recommendations, which do not relate to service provision, but data collection.
- 12.2. Please note, gender, age, and ethnicity were recorded by almost all services that submitted data to the needs assessment; for the remaining characteristics the needs assessment only has partial data.

³¹ [Safe lives \(2024\) Facts and Figures](#)

Gender

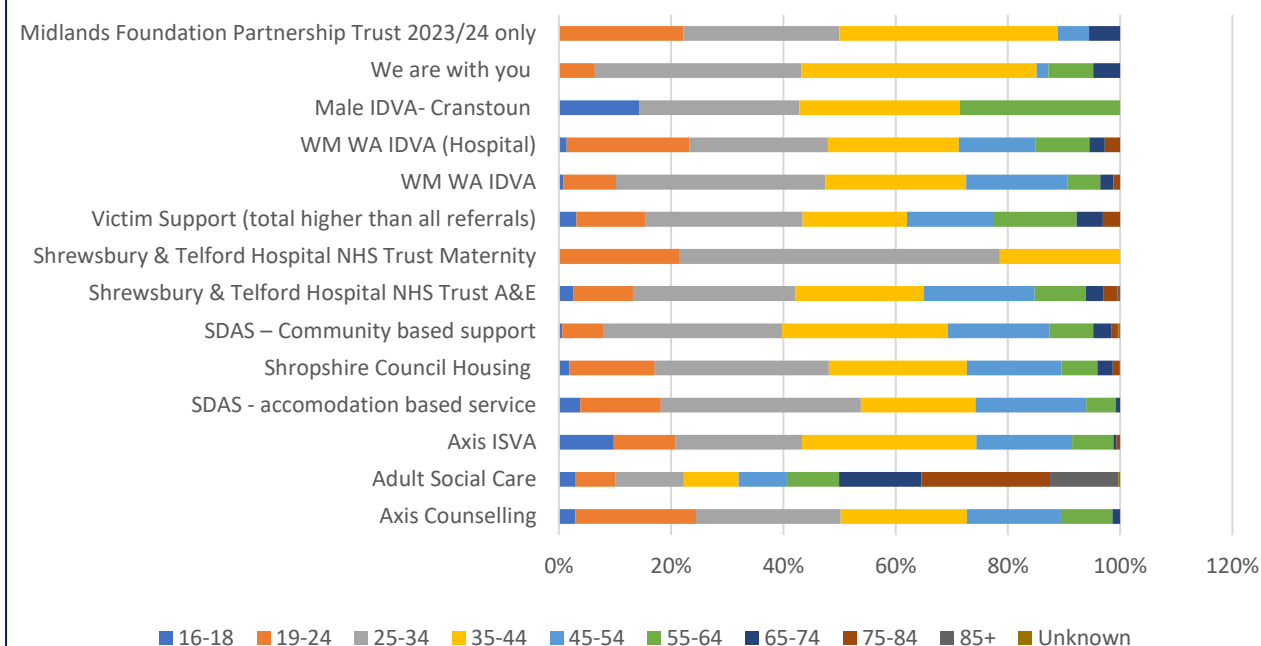


- 12.3. Whilst anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of their gender, the majority of victims disclosing, reporting or being referred to services in Shropshire are female.
- 12.4. Only six services shared data on Transgender and nonbinary people being referred or reported: PEGS, Axis Counselling and ISVA service, Shropshire Council Homelessness, SDAS refuge and SDAS outreach community support.
- 12.5. Research has shown that Transgender victims/survivors of abuse are unlikely to report their abuse to the police or to contact domestic abuse services directly (Safelives, 2020)³². This suggests that reports of domestic abuse are likely to be lower than the number of Transgender people who actually experienced abuse.
- 12.6. There was also a proportion of victim/survivors whose gender was unknown.
- 12.7. **Recommendation:** All services to collect victim/survivors' gender in order to help better understand domestic abuse in Shropshire and assess unmet need.

Age

³² [Safe Lives \(2020\) Transgender Victims' and Survivors 'Experiences of Domestic Abuse](#)

Age of victims 2022/23 and 2023/24



12.8. The data provided, suggests that in Shropshire the majority of victims/survivors supported by domestic abuse services are aged between 25-44 years old. The data provided also shows that there are very few people aged 85+ in Shropshire who are being referred to domestic abuse services.

12.9. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)³³ for the year ending March 2023 showed a higher percentage of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those aged 45 to 54 years and 60 years and over.

12.10. For the purpose of this needs assessment, in line with AgeUK³⁴ and NHS England³⁵ an older person is defined as 65+ unless otherwise stated.

12.11. According to Age UK³⁶ older people are just as likely to be abused by an adult child or grandchild as they are a spouse or partner – this also means that men become at increased risk of being subjected to domestic abuse as they age. Many older people subjected to abuse have a health condition or disability, which may mean they rely on their abuser for care and support. Older people may face several barriers to seeking and accessing support. For example, Age UK state that older people with disabilities, or those from LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority backgrounds, may face further barriers to leaving an abusive relationship – this may be due to a lack of appropriate services, community barriers, discrimination, or a reliance on carers.

12.12. Several services provided feedback in relation to the older age population. This feedback included that there is a need for an increased understanding around domestic abuse and

³³ [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(2023\) Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](https://www.csew.gov.uk/reports-and-publications/later-life-uk-factsheet.pdf)

³⁴ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/later-life-uk-factsheet.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/older-people/improving-care-for-older-people/>

³⁶ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2022/december/new-data-on-domestic-abuse-in-older-people/>

dementia within Shropshire.

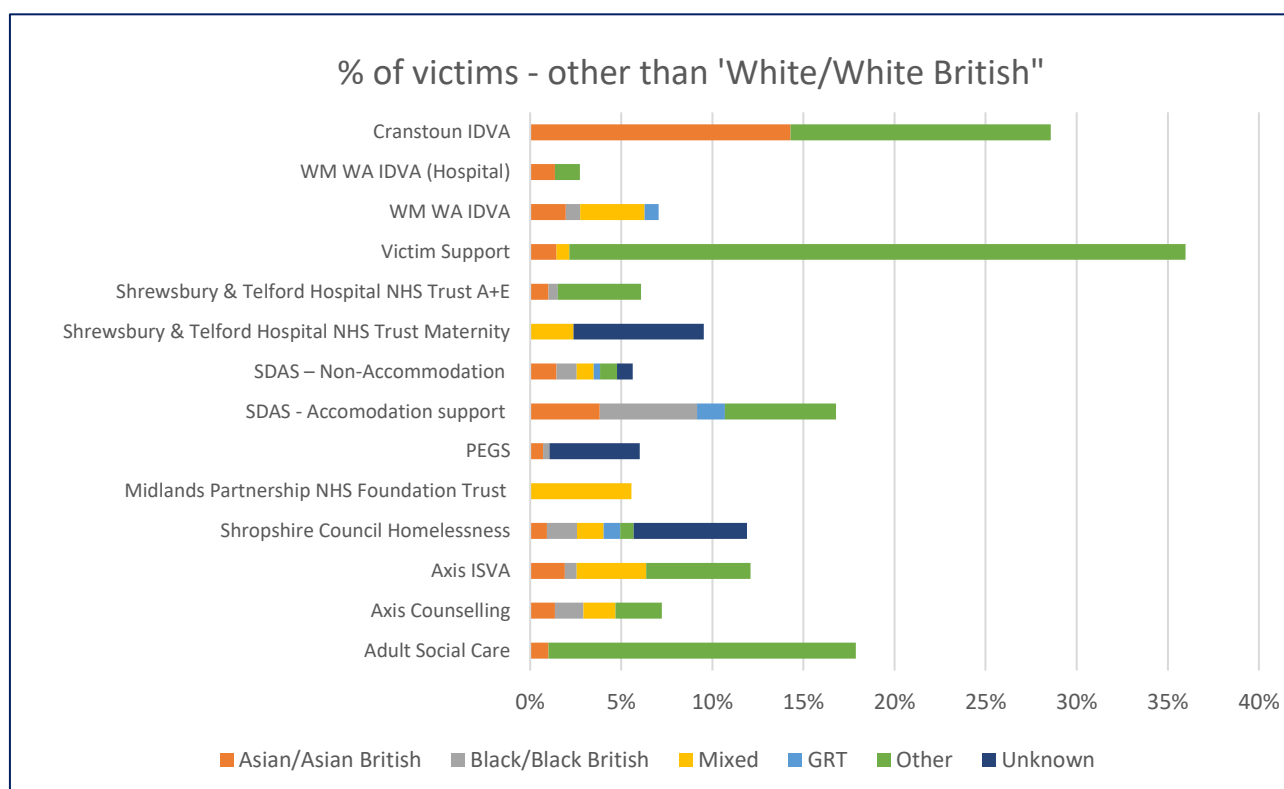
12.13. **Recommendation:** As a Partnership, explore how to reach all age groups in regard to domestic abuse support services.

12.14. **Recommendation:** To explore what is needed within Shropshire to assist those working with families where there is a link between domestic abuse and dementia.

Ethnicity

12.15. 14 services provided data around ethnicity. The most common ethnic group was White/White British.

Below presents a chart on the breakdown of ethnicities of survivors who did not identify as White/White British:



12.16. A large number of ethnic groups provided were identified as 'other with no further clarification. This identifies a need for more detailed ethnicity classifications wherever possible.

Immigration Status

12.17. 5 services recorded immigration status of victims/survivors: SDAS Refuge and SDAS community-based service, Shropshire Council Housing Service, West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) IDVA and WMWA Hospital service.

2022/23 & 2023/24 total number of victims whose immigration status has been identified	Housing	SDAS refuge	SDAS Community based support	WMWA IDVA	WMWA Hospital IDVA
Family Visa (e.g. partner or parent)	0	2	7	2	0
Work/Student/Visit Visa	19	0	0	0	1
Asylum Seeker (public funds not accessible but asylum support available)	0	0	1	0	0
Refugee (public funds accessible)	0	16	21	0	0
No immigration leave/expired leave	0	4	5	0	0
EEA National			4	1	
UK National			3		
Other/Unknown/Prefer not to say	9	1	7	0	1
Indefinite Leave to remain				1	
Pre-settled status				1	
Settled status				2	

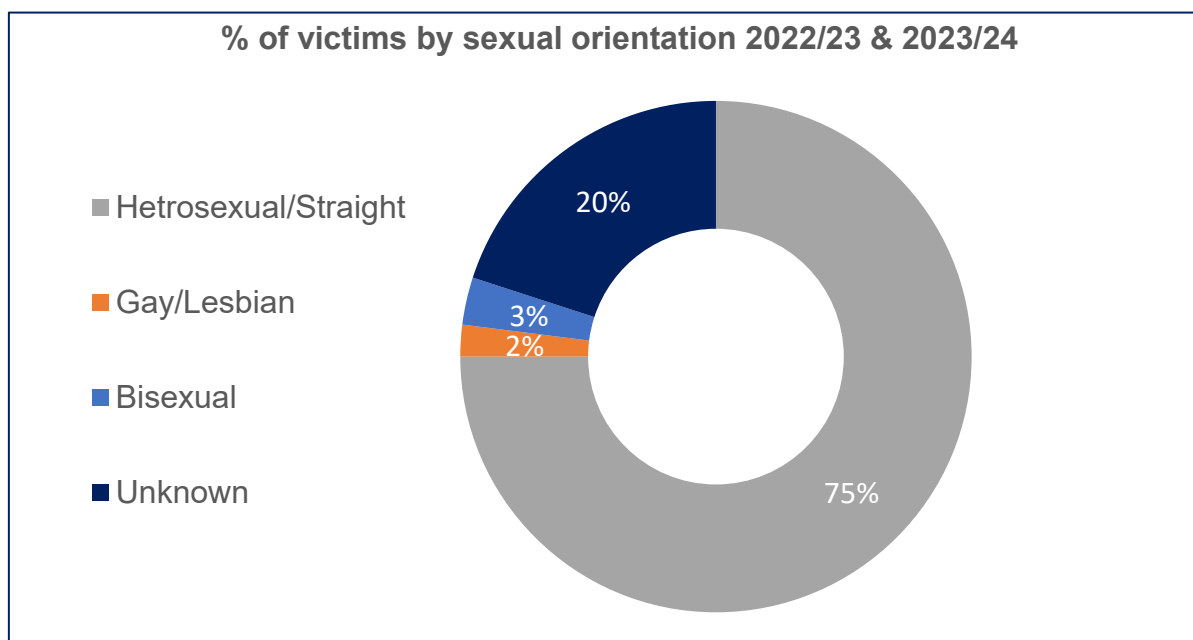
12.18. The most common immigration status of victim/survivors was refugee followed by work/student/visit visa.

12.19. In 2020, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner released 'Safety Before Status'³⁷ a report around improving pathways to support for migrant victims of domestic abuse. The report highlights the challenges survivors with insecure immigration status face when seeking safety and security and highlighted that "...without recourse to public funds, too many are unable to access life-saving refuge, if they are forced to flee their homes".

Sexual Orientation

12.20. 13 services collected the sexual orientation of victims and survivors in 2022/23 and 2023/24:

³⁷ [Domestic Abuse Commissioner \(2020\) Safety before status: Improving pathways to support for migrant victims of domestic abuse](#)



12.21. The majority of victim/survivors were heterosexual/straight. However, LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse are disproportionately underrepresented in domestic abuse services. This is often a result of specific barriers existing on a personal and systemic level, which prevent LGBT+ survivors from getting the help and support they need (Galop, 2019³⁸).

12.22. **Recommendation:** To explore potential barriers which may be preventing LGBT+ survivors from accessing domestic abuse support within Shropshire.

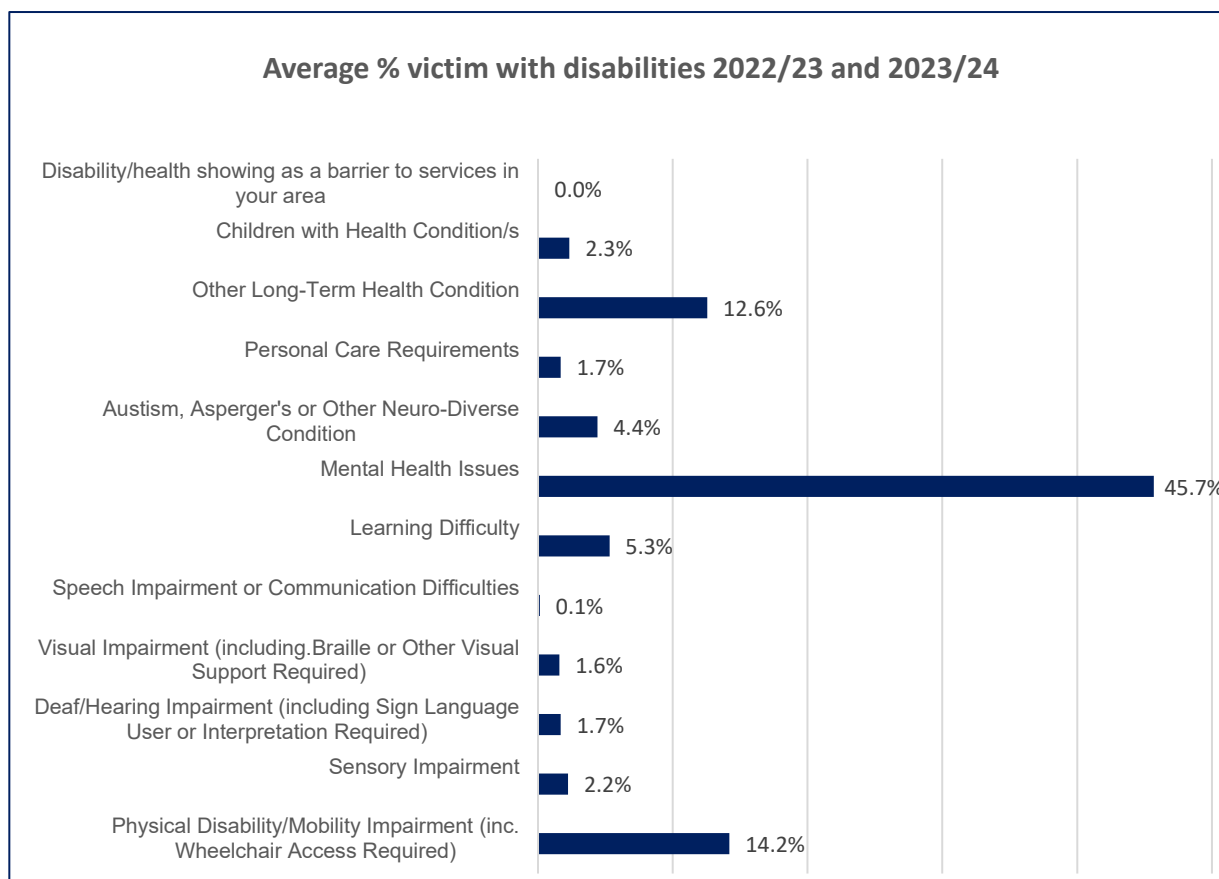
Disability

12.23. 15 services provided data around victim/survivor's disability in 2022/23 and 2023/24 shown below:

Service	Number of clients with a disability 2022/23 & 2023/24
Axis Counselling	258
Axis ISVA	123
Shropshire Council – Homelessness	164
PEGS	98
SDAS – non-accommodation	354
SDAS- Refuge accommodation	53
Shropshire Telford Hospital Trust Maternity	0
Shrewsbury Telford Hospital Trust A+E	0
We are with You	186
Victim Support	28
WM WA IDVA	111
WM WA IDVA (Hospital)	25
Shropshire Council Adult social care	228
Cranstoun - Male IDVA	5
Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (2022/2023 only)	1

³⁸ [Galop \(2019\) Barriers faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ \(LGBT+\) people in accessing non-LGBT+ domestic abuse support services](#)

12.24. Out of the 15 services recording disability, 10 services recorded some detail of the nature of disability of victim/survivors in 2022/23 and 2023/24 shown below:



12.25. The most common disability of victims and survivors between 2022/23 and 2023/24 was mental health issues. It is important to note that domestic abuse can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on the mental health of survivors and their children.

12.26. In 2015, Public Health England³⁹ published a report on disability and domestic abuse which reviewed published evidence and statistical information about domestic abuse affecting disabled people. It highlighted that disabled people experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse. They also experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people

12.27. **Recommendation:** to continue to map the pathway for access to mental health support, to better understand the need for mental health support in Shropshire for domestic abuse survivors

12.28. **Recommendation:** For all services to consider revising how they record disability to include a breakdown of the nature of disability.

³⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_topic_overview_FINAL.pdf

Additional Support Needs

12.29. 6 services provided data around victim/ survivor's support needs in 2022/23 and 2023/24 shown below:

Additional support needs	WMWA Hospital IDVA	WMWA IDVA	SDAS-refuge	SDAS community-based service	Shropshire council - housing	Cranstoun Male IDVA
Care Leaver	0	0	4	18	12	0
Service Personnel/Armed Forces	0	0	0	6	5	0
Offending History	1	9	12	37	13	1
Homeless	0	4	77	175		1
Rough Sleeper	0	0	12	23	14	0
Alcohol Misuse	6	18	19	92	23	0
Drug Misuse	6	17	16	70	18	0
Sex Work			1	12		0
Legal Support	67	238	87	645		0
Financial Support	61	224	89	466		0
Other- mental health	32	87	90	589		
Other – physical health	8	27	83	255		

12.30. The most common reported additional support needs were legal and financial support. Mental health was also identified as one of the most common additional support needs.

12.31. Domestic abuse can have a severe and long-lasting impact on mental health for victim/survivors of domestic abuse. Women's Aid⁴⁰ highlight being subjected to domestic abuse can have devastating and long-term consequences for mental wellbeing.

12.32. The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP)⁴¹ states, "between 2020-2022 a total of 114 people died of suspected suicide in the backdrop of domestic abuse. That is 5 people a month. 85% of those who died were women and 15% men. In year 3, there was a 7% decrease (17 people less) in the recorded number of deaths compared with year 2." (Learning Briefing 2024).

12.33. In turn, there is a need for further exploration into the additional needs of victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

12.34. **Recommendation:** For all services, to collect and report on data around the additional support needs of victim/survivors of domestic abuse who access their services. This will help to better understand the additional support needs of survivors in Shropshire.

⁴⁰ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-reality-of-the-barriers-to-mental-health-support/>

⁴¹ <https://www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/media/tcwkgpnb/domestic-abuse-and-suicide-learning-briefing.pdf>

Marital Status and Household Structure

12.35. 11 services collected data on marital status and 6 on household structure. Out of the six services that provided data. The most common household structure was single adult with children, followed by single with no children and partners with no children.

Employment Status

12.36. 7 services recorded employment status of victim/survivors in 2022/23 and 2023/24:

Occupation 2022/23 & 2023/24	% of total victims where services have recorded their occupation
Employed	23%
Unemployed	22%
Student	1%
Looking after	2%
Retired	9%
Economically inactive	13%
Unknown	29%

12.37. The highest occupation type, apart from 'other' was employed (23%), followed closely by unemployed (22%). Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on employment and therefore, it is vital that workplaces in Shropshire consider if they have domestic abuse policies and procedures for their workforce.

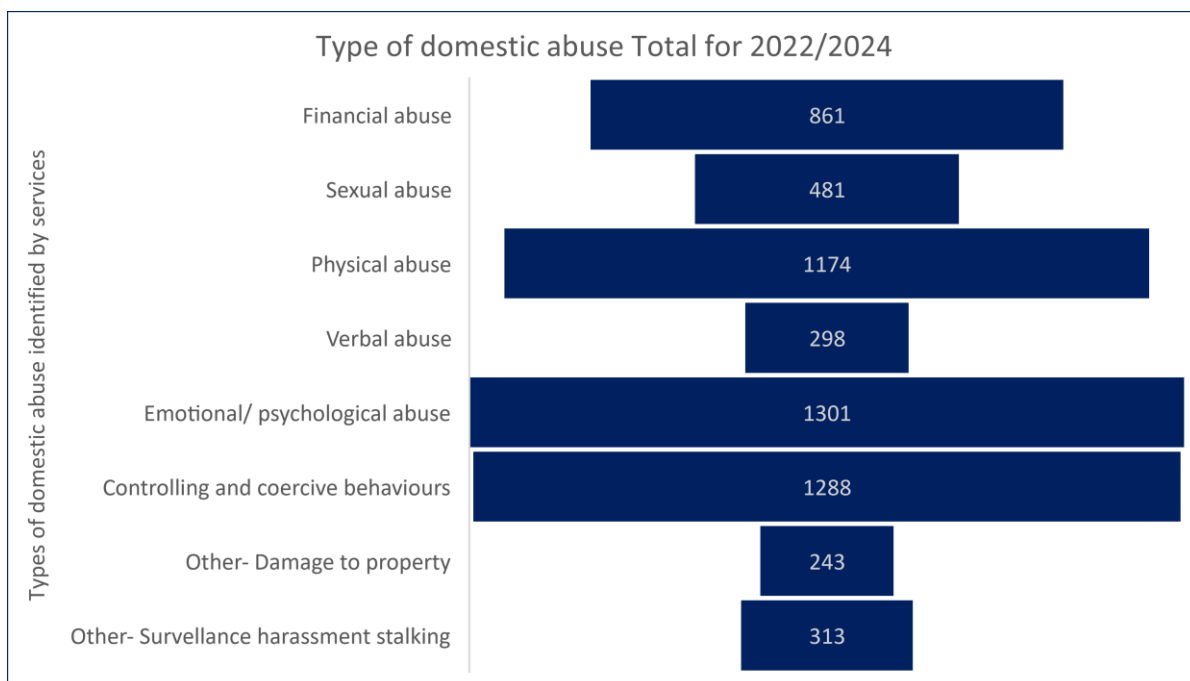
12.38. Workplaces can provide valuable support for employees who are being subjected to domestic abuse. In 2021, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy⁴² published a report on improving workplace support for domestic abuse victims, including raising awareness and sharing best practice among employers. This report suggests that to support victims of domestic abuse organisations should, wherever possible, have a domestic abuse policy in place which are easily accessible as well as embedding support to victims of domestic abuse into wider organisational frameworks, especially diversity and inclusion, but also health and wellbeing and relevant HR policies and practices.

12.39. **Recommendation:** To raise awareness to businesses within Shropshire, around the importance of having a domestic abuse policy in place to help to ensure that victim/survivors of domestic abuse, who are employed are supported by their employer.

Types of domestic abuse

12.40. 7 services provided data around the type of domestic abuse their clients were subjected to between 2022/23 and 2023/24 shown below.

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>



12.41. The most common type of domestic abuse was emotional/psychological abuse. Followed by controlling and coercive behaviours.

12.42. It is important to note, as highlighted by Victim Support⁴³ that domestic abuse can take many different forms and is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse.

12.43. **Recommendation:** For all services to record where appropriate, the type of domestic abuse their clients are being subjected to.

13. Children and Young People Victim/Survivors

13.1. In the UK, over 105,000 children live in homes where there is high-risk domestic abuse and 78% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others (Safe Lives MARAC national dataset, 2023⁴⁴).

13.2. Services available for children and young people are provided by SDAS and Victim Support and provided in section 19 around non accommodation based domestic abuse provision, and the response of Shropshire Council Children's Services are included further on in this needs assessment.

⁴³ Victim Support 'Domestic abuse' accessed via: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/domestic-abuse/#:~:text=Domestic%20abuse%20can%20take%20different%20forms>,

⁴⁴ [Safe lives \(2023\) Marac National Dataset](#)

- 13.3. Due to the limited specialist service provision, there is limited data on children and young people's needs relating to domestic abuse. It should also be noted that most of the data available refers to children and young people who have had concerns raised about them, not, as with adult victims, reporting issues for themselves.
- 13.4. Please note, the data provided by Shropshire Council Childrens Services was a snapshot as of 31st March 2024 which should be considered when analysing the data provided.

Disclosures, Reporting or Referrals

Disclosures, reporting or referrals for child victims/survivors (including unborn)	2022/23	2023/24
SDAS Accommodation-based services <i>number of CYP accommodated with a parent</i>	45	77
SDAS Community-based CYP service	43	37
SDAS Community-based service (outreach and idva) <i>number of adult victims/survivors with involvement in Children's Social Care, including those with Care Orders (snapshot as of Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24)</i>	113	112
Shropshire Council Early help services <i>Under 19s with open early help episode at end of each year with domestic abuse identified as issue in most recent assessment</i>	365	317
Shropshire Council Children's Social Care Services <i>Open Cases where DV identified on Referral/Social Work Assessment</i>	6436	6663
Shropshire Council Child Protection plans with DA as primary issue (as at the 31 st of March each year)	122	101
Shropshire Council Children in Need plans with DA as primary issue (as at 31 st March each year)	61	77
Shropshire Council Children's Social Care Services <i>Open Looked After Children cases where domestic abuse was identified on the referral/social work assessment (31st March 2024 snapshot)</i>		309
Victim Support (Young people aged 16 -18)	0	4

- 13.5. There is an absence of data relating to the nature of the domestic abuse children and young people have experienced: living in a family with an abuser, being abused by an intimate partner, multi-victimisation or being a child or young person causing harm to family members or intimate partners.

Level of Domestic Abuse (DV) Contacts

- 13.6. It is important to consider the safeguarding threshold levels across the Partnership when analysing the DA contacts. These can be shown below. It is important to highlight that the threshold is currently under review. To view the threshold in full please see Shropshire

13.7. Below are the list of DV contacts with Level outcomes for 2022/23 and 2023/24

Childrens services	Level	2022/23	2023/24	Total
DV Contacts in period outcome Level 1	LVL1	3682	3677	7359
DV Contacts in period outcome Level 2	LVL2	516	681	1197
DV Contacts in period outcome Level 3	LVL3	337	382	719
DV Contacts in period outcome Level 4	LVL4	276	244	520
DV Contacts in period outcome Allocated Social Worker	SW	1625	1679	3304

13.8. The most common level of domestic abuse contacts in 2022/23 and 2023/24 was Level 1. However, all Levels, apart from Level 4 showed an increase in DV contacts in 2023/24.

Age and Gender

13.9. Shropshire Council services work with children across the whole age spectrum, including unborn babies through to those turning 18 years. Children's services provided the needs assessment with a snapshot of Open Cases, where domestic abuse was identified on Referral/Social Work Assessment. As part of this, they provided a snapshot of the age and gender of children in Children Social Care Services as of 31st March 2024:

Age Band	All open cases where domestic abuse identified on referral/social work assessment snapshot (March 31 st 2024) (N=812)	Open children looked after where domestic abuse identified on referral/ Social work assessment (March 31 st , 2024) (N=309)	Open leaving care where DV identified on referral/social work assessment (March 31 st , 2024) (N=21)
0 – 4	268	92	
5 – 9	229	97	
10 – 14	196	78	
15+	119	42	21
Total	812	309	21

Gender	All Open cases where domestic abuse identified on referral/social work assessment snapshot (March 31 st , 2024) (N=812)	Open children looked after where domestic abuse identified on referral/ Social work assessment (March 31 st , 2024) (N=309)	Open leaving care where DV identified on referral/social work assessment (March 31 st , 2024) (N=21)
Female	373	139	9
Male	436	170	12
Unborn	3		
Total	812	309	21

⁴⁵ <https://www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/procedures/threshold-documents/>

Ethnicity

13.10. Shropshire Council Children's Services' data collection on ethnicity for children

Ethnicity	All Open cases where domestic abuse identified on referral/social work assessment snapshot ((N=812)	Open children looked after where domestic abuse identified on referral/ Social work assessment (N=309)	Open leaving care where DV identified on referral/social work assessment (N=21)
A1 - White British	723	290	19
A2 - White Irish	1	1	
A3 - Any other White background	13	3	
A4 - Traveller of Irish Heritage	4		
A5 - Gypsy / Roma	2		
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	7	2	2
B2 - White and Black African	4	4	
B3 - White and Asian	9	3	
B4 - Any other mixed background	13	5	
C1 – Indian	9		
C2 – Pakistani	2		
C4 - Any other Asian background	1		
D1 – Caribbean	2		
D2 – African	3		
D3 - Any other Black background	4		
E2 - Other background	5	1	
E4 - Information not yet obtained	10		
Total	812	309	21

13.11. **Recommendation:** To explore if children and adults services are referring into domestic abuse support services within Shropshire. Where referral rates are low, teams to be directed to the internal Shropshire Council Wellbeing Pages to access the Domestic Abuse directory which includes local and national domestic abuse support services information.

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service – Children and Young People

13.12. Below provides a summary of the accepted and repeat referrals to the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Children and Young People service:

SDAS CYP	2022/23	2023/24
SDAS Community based CYP service referrals accepted	36	23
SDAS Community based CYP service repeat referrals	5	2

Operation Encompass

- 13.13. Data was provided by Shropshire Council's Operation Encompass lead. Operation Encompass is a nationally recognised scheme that provides notifications to schools of domestic abuse incidents reported to police in which children are in the household. Please note the MARAC notifications began in 2023/24.

Notifications	2022/23	2023/24
Operation Encompass	1617	1682
MARAC	N/A	57

Prevalence of the 'toxic trio'

- 13.14. The Shropshire Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment⁴⁶ included the Childhood Local Data on Risks and Needs (CHLDRN) produced by the Children's Commissioner for England⁴⁷. Parental mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance misuse have been identified in this data as commonly present in the lives of many vulnerable children.
- 13.15. The Shropshire Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment includes an analysis of this data which looks to measure, the prevalence of this "toxic trio" and victimisation of children where these factors are present in the household in Shropshire.
- 13.16. The toxic trio rate in Shropshire, where children are in households with all three issues (co-occurring parental substance misuse, mental ill health and domestic abuse) was 9 per 1,000 0-17 year olds, similar to the benchmark and national rate. The rate of children in households with any of the three issues was below the national and benchmark rates at 151 per 1,000 0-17s.
- 13.17. Of all three issues (parental mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance misuse) the highest rate was among children in households where a parent had a severe mental health problem at 106 per 1,000 0–17-year-olds, a trend also seen nationally and among benchmark areas.

Shropshire Council

- 13.18. A comprehensive Children and Young People Needs Assessment is being created by Shropshire Council, which includes the risk factors and wider determinants of health and wellbeing relating to domestic abuse in the home. (see population and context chapter).

⁴⁶ [Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

⁴⁷ <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/chldrn/>

West Mercia Police data – Children and Domestic Abuse

13.19. West Mercia Police provided a breakdown of child roles in domestic abuse for Quarter 4 2022/23 and Quarter 2023/24 shown below:

Snapshot	Q4 2022/23	Q42023/24
Involved party	404	388
Victim	18	13
Witness	10	8

13.20. This shows that in the snapshot provided for both quarters, children were most commonly the involved party.

13.21. **Recommendation:** To consider how West Mercia Police record children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right and explore where this data is collected, how it is reported on, the frequency of the reporting and who receives the report.

14. Perpetrators of Abuse/Those Causing Harm

14.1. Probation collected data on people on probation who are domestic abuse perpetrators they provided the number of people in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and shared the overall number within Shropshire.

Probation Data

14.2. Probation shared a snapshot of the number of people on Probation in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin combined, as well as Shropshire individually.

Number of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators (registration or order)

Area	Community	Custody	Total
Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin	495	196	691
Shropshire	153	60	213

Age category of People on Probation, in the community, who are Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

Area	18-21 yrs.	22-25 yrs.	26-35 yrs.	Over 35 yrs.	Deceased
Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin	24	37	177	256	1
Shropshire	8	9	58	78	

Gender of People on Probation, in the community, who are Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

Area	Female	Male
Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin	35	460
Shropshire	11	142

Ethnicity of People on Probation, in the community, who are Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

Area	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	(blank)
Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin	9	14	11	450	2	9
Shropshire		1	2	144	1	5

15. Disclosures, Reporting or Referrals for Those Causing Harm

15.1. The table below shows the number of disclosures, reporting or referrals for those causing harm, to services that work with domestic abuse perpetrators in Shropshire between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Disclosures, reporting or referrals for those causing harm	2022/23	2023/24
Drive – Cranstoun	N/A	24
Men and Masculinities- Cranstoun	N/A	55
We are with you	117	114
West Mercia Police (suspects) (snapshot of Q4 both years)	434	218
Richmond fellowship (snapshot of quarter 3)	43	N/A

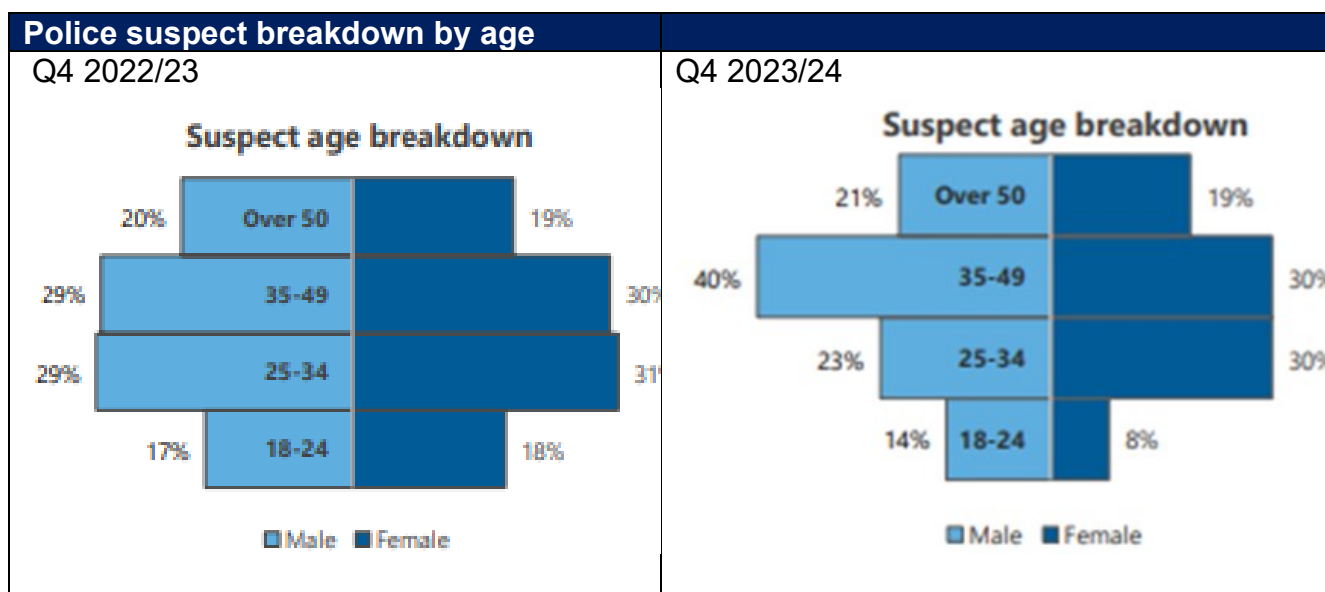
West Mercia Police Data

15.2. West Mercia Police provided a breakdown of the percentage of male and female perpetrators in quarter 4 2022/23 and quarter 4 2023/24.

Offenders	Police Q4 2022/23	Police Q4 2023/24
Male perpetrator	74%	70%
Female perpetrator	25%	29%

Age of Suspect

- 15.3. West Mercia Police also provided a breakdown of suspects age, for Q4 2022/23 and 2023/24 which is shown in the graphs below



- 15.4. Services within Shropshire, that work with domestic abuse perpetrators also provided a breakdown of service users by age shown below:

Age	16-18	19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Drive – Cranstoun (2023/24)	0	5	8	8	3	0	0	0	0
Men and Masculinities- Cranstoun (2023/24)	0	7	21	18	6	3	0	0	0
We are with you (2022/23 and 2023/24)	0	14	103	84	42	12	5	0	0
Richmond fellowship (2022/23)	0	1	21	18	2	1	0	0	0

- 15.5. There was an identified gap in response to high-risk perpetrators and those who do not accept a referral / do not engage with the behaviour change programme. For this reason, the DRIVE Programme has been implemented in Shropshire, offering a multi-agency response to high-risk, high-harm perpetrators that has been shown, in other areas, to be effective in reducing harm to adult and child victims.
- 15.6. **Recommendation:** To continue to raise awareness to professionals on what is available locally for domestic abuse perpetrators and to include the information in the domestic abuse pathway for professionals.

16. Accommodation Provision: Safe and Other

- 16.1. This section presents the overall response across refuge and sanctuary scheme which are the only provisions in Shropshire within the definition of safe accommodation. Following that, the response of Shropshire Council Housing and Homelessness, and other accommodation and accommodation-based support are listed.

Refuge

- 16.2. Refuge provision within Shropshire is delivered by Connexus; a registered social landlord since 2017 who provide the service involved in the delivery of refuge, Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS). The refuge properties are owned by Connexus and Shropshire Council commission the accommodation-based support to adults and children as well as some additional funding towards outreach services, provided by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service.
- 16.3. At the time of writing the needs assessment, there are a total of 22 units of refuge accommodation in Shropshire. The accommodation provision includes
- One 10-bed female only refuge known as 'main refuge', which includes space for 15 children. 4 rooms have individual use of bathroom facilities, but all rooms share kitchen facilities
 - Seven units of dispersed refuge accommodation, this includes space for 8 children. One property includes two units for female survivors including space for three children; one property providing three units for female survivors including space for three children; and one property with two units for male survivors, one of these units can accommodate two children, and the units are wheelchair accessible with a wet room. All dispersed properties have shared living space, kitchen/dining area, and bathrooms.
 - Finally, there are 5 self-contained units in a shared complex which meet the needs of women facing multiple disadvantages. No children are accepted in these units. The majority of support is offered to women fleeing domestic abuse who also have drug and alcohol misuse and mental health related needs, though other complex needs such as prison leavers are accepted.
 - All dispersed refuge accommodation is located in confidential areas that feel safe to residents, and the properties themselves are well managed and maintained.
- 16.4. The 'main refuge' is in an old building, which means the layout is not ideal for residents who have access requirements. The lack of storage space means that communal and staff areas are used for storage, leading to many residents not using the communal spaces available to them. The location is safe, despite being well known in the area, with a sense of community and protectiveness, as well as a welcoming approach to residents and those who move on from refuge to reside in the area.
- 16.5. Referrals for those with no recourse to public funds can be accepted provided they are already receiving the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession, or there is an

agreement that another agency will fund the space until the adult has access to benefits. Connexus have also supported this in the past on an ad hoc basis, but this is not contained in policy.

Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme

- 16.6. Accommodation provisions such as refuges and other forms of emergency and temporary accommodation can provide a safe and supportive environment for households fleeing violence and abuse. However, there is a need to enable households at risk of violence and abuse, to remain in their own homes when it is safe to do so.
- 16.7. A Sanctuary Scheme is 'a multi-agency victim/survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures (Sanctuary) and support.⁴⁸ Therefore, a Sanctuary Scheme is a means of preventing homelessness. The scheme also gives victims/survivors a choice to remain in their property.
- 16.8. Historically, in Shropshire, West Mercia Police Design Out Crime Officers (DOCO) have carried out crime risk assessments on client's properties, who have been identified as high risk by the Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU). However, if a client is not on a high-risk management plan with them, then they would not have received a crime risk assessment.
- 16.9. In response to this, Shropshire introduced a Sanctuary Scheme on the 3rd of April 2023. In October 2023, a decision was made to employ a former DOCO to carry out Sanctuary Scheme assessments. Therefore, survivors who are standard or medium risk (as assessed by West Mercia Police) or are not involved with the police and are at any risk level, are now eligible to be referred for a crime risk assessment, as suggested by the Whole Housing Toolkit⁴⁹.

Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme Process

- 16.10. The Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme is available to all households and individuals, regardless of tenure or gender, at risk of domestic abuse. Referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme are made by specialist service professionals. In order to be eligible for the scheme:
- The client must want to remain in the property.
 - The perpetrator must no longer be living at the property or have the right to remain in the property.
 - If the property is rented, there must be Landlord permission obtained.
- 16.11. If eligible, the Sanctuary Assessor will carry out a sanctuary scheme assessment, which can be explained as a thorough assessment of the household's security. The Assessor will consider ways to increase physical safety of victim/survivors by preventing or delaying perpetrators from gaining access to the property and/or the Sanctuary Safe

⁴⁸ Standing Together (2020) Sanctuary Scheme Toolkit

⁴⁹ <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/innovations-in-practice/whole-housing-approach/whole-housing-toolkit/>

Room. It also intends to increase the victim/survivor's perceived safety.

- 16.12. The Sanctuary Scheme assessor will recommend the addition of security measures where required. As a minimum, the security measures applied must be to recognised British Standards and must comply with means of escape from fire requirements.

Data 2023-2024

- 16.13. The data for Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme provided below, refers to the data collected from the Domestic Abuse Prevention Team in relation to clients referred by specialist services. This data does not include data from West Mercia Police DOCOs. In turn, the data provided does not provide the full scope of Sanctuary Scheme works within Shropshire.

- 16.14. **Recommendation:** For Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme Coordinators to work with West Mercia Police, to gather data in relation to clients receiving assessments in Shropshire to create a comprehensive picture on the delivery of the Scheme.

- 16.15. Below shows the referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme in April 2023 to March 2024.

Sanctuary scheme measure	April 2023- March 2024
Number of referrals received	50
Number of referrals accepted	39
Unsuccessful referrals/accessed denied	11
List of reasons for unsuccessful/denied:	
Referral closed after attempts made to assess property	1
Referral closed after no response	3
Inappropriate referral by referrer	1
Client out of area (Shropshire) so declined	2
Not eligible	2
Client declined	2

- 16.16. Below presents the top referrers to the sanctuary scheme

Referral source	Percentage of referrals April 2023- March 2024 (N=50)
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	52.9%
West Mercia Police	25.5%
Local Authority- housing and homelessness	5.9%
IDVA- West Mercia Women's Aid	3.9%
Local Authority- adult safeguarding	2%

- 16.17. The Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme provided clients demographics for those clients that were accepted to the Sanctuary scheme shown below:

Sanctuary Scheme accepted clients' demographics April 23 to March 2024	
Gender	Disability

- Female: 37 clients - Male: 2 clients	- Yes: 5 clients - No: 10 clients - Prefer not to say: 2 clients - Not provided/did not answer: 22 clients
Ethnicity - White/White British/White Other: 30 clients - Mixed Caribbean: 1 client - Eastern European: 1 client - Arabic: 1 client - Prefer not to say: 1 client - Not answered: 5 clients	Sexual orientation - Heterosexual/Straight: 32 clients - Gay woman: 1 clients - Prefer not to say – 1 client - Not provided/did not answer- 5 clients

16.18. The Sanctuary Scheme requires any clients referred to be supported by a specialist service. It is important to note, some clients may have been supported by more than one specialist support service. The following services were identified as providing support between 2022/23 and 2023/24

Domestic Abuse Specialist Support*	Number of accepted sanctuary scheme clients accessing support
SDAS	27
West Mercia Women's Aid	6
Domestic Abuse Risk Officer	11
PEGS	1

*It is important to note that these are the support services identified by the referrer to the Scheme and clients may be supported by other services.

16.19. The needs assessment was informed that having a designated Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme Assessor has been beneficial for professionals.

Shropshire Fire Service

16.20. Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, 14 clients of the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme were referred to The Shropshire Fire Service.

16.21. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service operates from 23 strategically located sites across Shropshire. They provide emergency response services for the whole of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, operating with 46 vehicles plus specialist appliances. Their prevention and protection activities also help educate and protect communities they serve and businesses within the area to avoid fires happening in the first place.

16.22. Since 2001, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service have carried out Home Fire Safety visits. In 2017, they expanded these visits to include a discussion on health and wellbeing. Most referrals for a fire risk assessment come from West Mercia Police, where the level of risk would be shared, and the fire service will act accordingly.

16.23. The Shropshire Fire Service also works with the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme, to ensure that when risk of fire or arson is identified by the Sanctuary Scheme assessor, a referral is passed to the Shropshire Fire Service to carry out a fire assessment of the property.

Shropshire Council Housing Response

16.24. Shropshire Council Housing service includes several different teams. This section provides a breakdown of all Shropshire Council Housing Teams and a short summary of their response.

The Housing Options Team:

16.25. Housing Options Team respond to and manage all homelessness applications, including those from people fleeing domestic abuse. If temporary accommodation is required, this is passed to the Temporary Accommodation team to facilitate. The Housing Support Team will then support individuals. All these teams (and the Rough Sleeper Team) are managed by the Homelessness Operations Manager, who is new in post (June 2022). As part of their response, Shropshire Council Housing teams are encouraged to signpost perpetrators to relevant support such as Respect, Drive and Rise.

The HomePoint Team:

16.26. If an application is made to HomePoint, and the applicant mentions being a current victim of domestic abuse, this will be passed to the Housing Options Team, who will contact the individual to progress a homelessness application. HomePoint can classify a case as domestic abuse where there is currently coercion or physical violence.

The Private Sector Housing Team:

16.27. This Private Sector Housing Team is located within the Place Directorate. In addition to managing moves as indicated by Occupational Therapy assessments (working with the Housing Options Team through a 'homeless at home' pathway), this team also works alongside Adult Social Care and mental health services in responding to homeowners in relation to home conditions, this is often due to hoarding and self-neglect.

The Housing Enforcement and Environmental Health Teams:

16.28. Housing Enforcement is in the Place Directorate, managing the enforcement of property conditions for tenants and landlords where complaints have been made and issues not resolved. They are also responsible for HMO (Houses with Multiple Occupancy) licencing and enforcement. Environmental Health is in the People Directorate and, in relation to residents, manages noise related complaints, pest control and other related matters.

Customer Services, Benefits Service and Welfare Support Team:

16.29. They have connected with the work led by Staff Wellbeing (see Shropshire Council) but are not otherwise connected with the Domestic Abuse Partnership, which is a gap. The Revenues and Benefits Service can provide financial support to victims/survivors, including covering rental costs for up to 52 weeks if there is intention to return; and they administer Discretionary Housing Payments in support of rent and housing costs. The

Welfare Support Team can support survivors who have fled through providing funds for essential items such as food, energy, or furniture, as well as help with removal costs, rent in advance or deposits if these cannot be met through Discretionary Housing Payments (administered by the Benefits Service). Staff signpost to Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service and West Mercia Women's Aid but there is no specific policy or procedure in place, and no staff training.

16.30. Shropshire Councils housing stock is managed by Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (Star Housing), an arms-length management organisation. They advertise the available properties, on Shropshire HomePoint.

16.31. In 2023, The Shropshire Council Allocations policy⁵⁰ and scheme was launched. This housing allocation policy and scheme seeks to meet the following aims:

- Ensure people in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity to access suitable housing that best meets their needs.
- To prevent and relieve homelessness.
- To make best use of the Council's and housing association stock.
- To help the Council meet statutory and strategic aims.
- To help contribute to the development of sustainable communities.
- To allow for the greatest degree of choice possible in the allocation of affordable housing

16.32. Shropshire Council are updating the IT system, this will improve the ability to better enable accurate and necessary data collection.

16.33. Shropshire Council has a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that is out for consultation currently. The previous strategy entitled 'Shropshire Council Homelessness Strategy' was dated 2015 – 2017.

Shelter audit – Shropshire Council Homelessness File Assessment

16.34. Between 28th May 2024 and 4th June 2024, Shelter's Consultancy Service and Systems Practice Team carried out an audit on a sample of 20 case files where decisions had been reached by Shropshire Council on:

- Prevention duty
- Relief duty
- Main duty
- Not homeless
- Not eligible
- Not in priority need
- Intentional homelessness

16.35. The audit assessed the following activities: Homelessness Assessment, Concluding Duty and Record Keeping.

⁵⁰ [Shropshire Council Allocations policy \(2023\)](#)

16.36. Part of the assessment involved looking at the suitability of Temporary Accommodation. Shelter shared that this was difficult to assess as all cases are initially booked into hotel accommodation. As there is no comprehensive suitability assessment or housing needs assessment on some files, clear information about the client's needs is not always obvious. In the cases that were able to be commented on, the overall score in this area is Poor (39%).

16.37. One case assessed by Shelter, involved a client who was a care leaver with high and complex needs, multiple physical and mental health problems. The client also has been subjected to domestic abuse and violence. The client's case is outlined below:

The client was offered interim accommodation however the client abandoned this after one hour of arriving and went to stay with family. The client did not stay at the interim accommodation offered as said it was triggering and was also expecting staff to be able to monitor her medical needs and was under the impression that it was a form of supported housing. No further offers of accommodation have been made thereafter and an intentional homelessness decision has been issued. B&B accommodation was not a suitable offer.

16.38. Shelter feedback around this case is that Shropshire Council must assess whether the interim accommodation was the correct environment for the client, considering their background as a care leaver who had been subjected to domestic abuse and their high complex support needs.

16.39. As part of this work, Shelter's Consultancy Service and Systems Practice Team carried out a telephone and email-based mystery shopping exercise for Shropshire Council Housing Options service. The exercise assessed the standard of initial contact handling for people who contact the authority for assistance with their housing problem.

16.40. A total of 25 telephone and 10 email shops were undertaken throughout March and April 2024. Shoppers used a range of scenarios with varying levels of support needs.

16.41. There were two domestic abuse scenarios and below shows feedback in relation to the advice they received:

Case 1- shopper was advised that their friend (victim of DA) should call the domestic abuse helpline and was informed that they may be able to offer a refuge.

Case 2- There was an absence of signposting to domestic abuse charities which was of concern.

16.42. These findings inform the needs assessment that there is a need to revise what suitable temporary accommodation is available for victims of domestic abuse, which accommodate their needs. There is also the need to ensure that housing options teams are signposting to local and national domestic abuse support.

- 16.43. The DAPT team consists of a Strategic Lead, Project Officer, Lived Experience Officer, Training Lead and a Sanctuary Scheme Assessor.
- 16.44. The Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead is responsible for ensuring the Local Authority meets all of its statutory duties as laid down by the DA Act 2021. They are also responsible for partnership working and understanding the national and local landscape for both victim and perpetrator work across Domestic & Sexual Abuse and Violence, plus any wider Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) issues.
- 16.45. The Domestic Abuse Project Officer works on domestic abuse projects, working with partners both internal and external to the Council to enable the projects to run in a truly collaborative way and is responsible for supporting the Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead in gathering and collating of data to inform current and future projects.
- 16.46. The Lived Experience Officer leads a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), to ensure the voice of lived experience is heard at the DA Local Partnership Board and other Boards as appropriate. The LEAG is working towards being an integral part of the creation of new procedures, processes, research, training, or new services, to ensure Shropshire's response to domestic abuse is informed, considerate and effective.
- 16.47. The Training Lead, provides bespoke training both internally, to council employees, and externally, to build on existing knowledge and skills and strengthen the response given to both survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 16.48. The Sanctuary Scheme Assessor carries out sanctuary assessments, assessing the level of risk faced by the household, identifying vulnerable areas within the home and making recommendations around appropriate safety measures. They also collaborate with other agencies involved in the scheme, such as local authorities, housing providers, private landlords, police, fire service and support services.

Recommendations for Housing Services Shropshire Council

- 16.49. When focussing on development we need to ensure that all forms of housing, including sheltered and supported accommodation, are safe and appropriate.
- 16.50. **Training and Referral Pathways:**
- Providing an appropriate level of training for staff according to their role
 - Raising awareness of the Domestic Abuse Directory of services accessed via Shropshire Council Well Being pages on the internal intranet.
- 16.51. Update the external internet Housing pages so all victim/survivors know how and where to access support. External internet pages must also include information for perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure they are aware of the support they can access to change their behaviour.

- 16.52. Ensure that survivors of domestic abuse, are signposted where necessary to furniture and clothing access which include but are not limited to local furniture schemes, little stars for children's clothing, baby stop and the Welfare Support Team.
- 16.53. Shropshire Council should progress with the Whole Housing Approach (WHA) including gaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation.
- 16.54. For all teams in the housing service, to consider their domestic abuse response by creating a set of policies and procedures.

17. Access to Safe Accommodation

- 17.1. This section presents data on access to refuge. Below is the total number of referrals to refuge received in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Refuge referrals	Total 2022/23 & 2023/24
Total referrals received	307
Referrals from within area	124
Referrals from outside of area	183

- 17.2. Looking at the referrals received from outside of area, the majority came from the West Midlands:
1. Telford and Wrekin being the highest with 18%
 2. Birmingham – 4%
 3. Walsall – 4%
 4. Worcestershire – 3%
 5. Coventry – 2%.

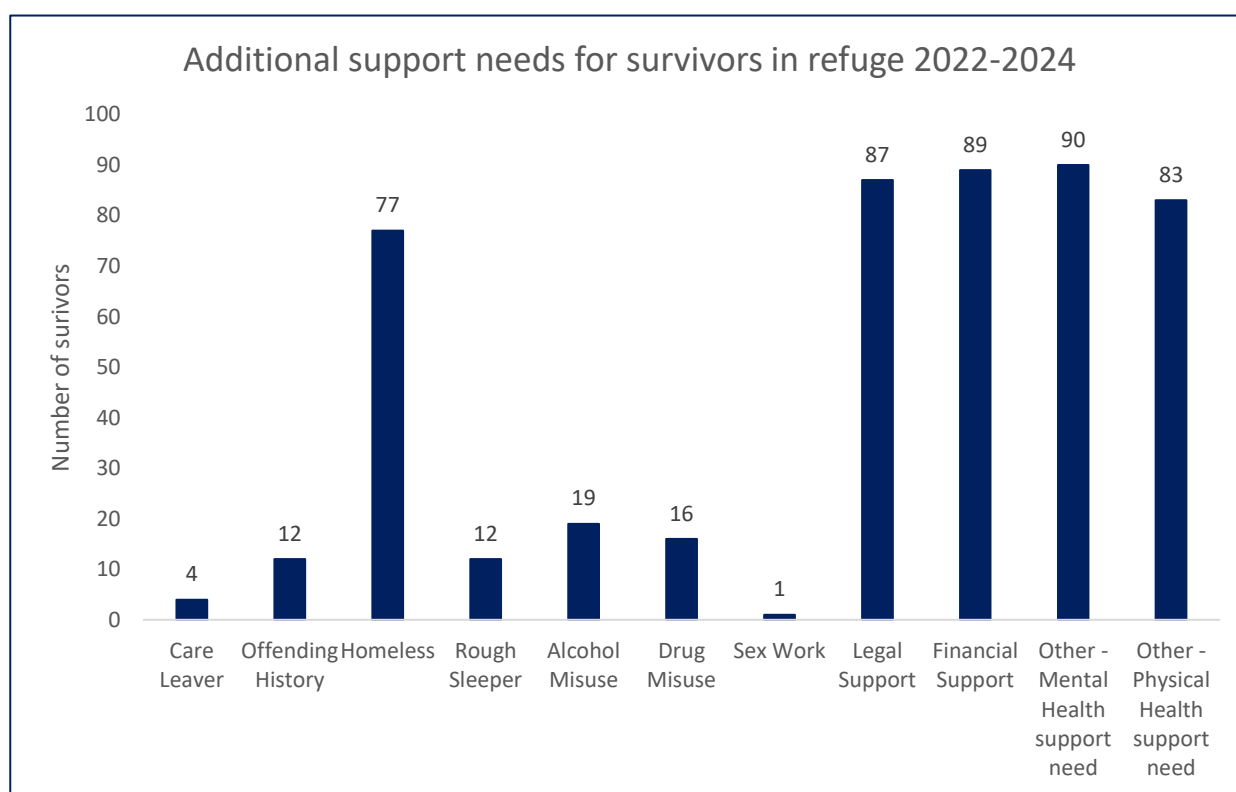
- 17.3. There are a variety of different sources that refer into refuge. In 2022/23 and 2023/2024, they were as follows

Referral sources (list with numbers):	Total number of referrals 2022/23 and 2023/24
Health - community children's health services	1
Health - other hospital	2
IDVA (West Mercia Women's Aid)/ ISVA	4
Local Authority Adult Social Care	1
Local Authority Children's Services - Early Help (including T&W Family Connect)	3
Local Authority Children's Services - Social Care	12
Local Authority Housing & Homelessness	55
Mental Health - Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust	2
Mental Health – Other	1
National Domestic Abuse Helpline WMWA Helpline	11
Self	85
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS)	24

West Mercia Police (including DAU & Liaison/Diversion)	9
Other (Adult Safeguarding)	11
Other (Child Safeguarding)	3
Other (Drug/Alcohol & Rehabilitation Services)	4
Other (Enable)	1
Other (Foodbank)	1
Other (Housing Associations/RSL)	21
Other (Other Domestic Abuse Services)	32
Other (Other Support Services)	18
Other (Probation, Willowdene)	3
Other (The Ark)	3

- 17.4. In both 2022/23 and 2023/24 the highest referral source to refuge was self-referrals. This was similar to the last needs assessment findings in 2022. This suggests that many victims and survivors are aware of SDAS and refer to the service.
- 17.5. The main demographics of service users have been identified in the previous section 'Adult victim/survivor demographics', however, here is additional information that helps us understand more about who is entering refuge.

Additional Support Needs:



- 17.6. Between 2022/23 and 2023/24 a total of 490 refuge clients additional support needs were identified. Mental health was the most reported additional support need.

18. Safe Accommodation Outcomes

18.1. This section presents the outcomes relating to people fleeing domestic abuse and seeking safe accommodation through refuge.

Refuge

18.2. Below includes the average length of stay, in days, for clients in refuge.

Refuge	2022/23			2023/24	
	Female	Male		Female	Male
Average length of stay, in days	153	375		151	378

18.3. It appears in both 2022/23 and 2023/24, males stay longer in refuge than females.

18.4. In order to measure the outcomes of safe accommodation, it is vital to look at the move on accommodation type for refuge service users. Move on data from refuge was collected for 35 females and 1 male in 2022/23 and 47 females and 3 men in 2023/24. This is shown below:

Refuge	2022/23			2023/24		
List move on accommodation type, and numbers:	Female	Male	Not disclosed	Female	Male	Not disclosed
Bed and Breakfast	0	0	0	1	0	0
LA General Needs	0	0	0	1	1	0
Living with Family / Friends	11	0	0	5	0	0
Owner Occupier	0	0	0	1	0	0
Private Sector	1	0	0	4	0	0
Returned Home	6	0	0	5	0	0
Rough Sleeper	0	0	0	1	0	0
RSL General Needs	0	0	0	1	0	0
Sheltered Housing	1	0	0	0	1	0
Social housing	10	0	0	16	1	0
Sofa Surfing	0	1	0	0	0	0
Student Accommodation	0	0	0	1	0	0
Supported Housing	1	0	0	1	0	0
Temporary Accommodation	4	0	0	8	0	0
Women's Refuge	1	0	0	1	0	0
Unknown	1	0	0	1	0	0

- 18.5. In 2022/23 the most common move on accommodation type for females was living with friends and family. In 2023/24, the most common move on accommodation type for females was social housing.
- 18.6. **Recommendation:** Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service to review how they record the move on accommodation types, to ensure there is consistency in reporting. For example, “RSL general needs” and “social housing” could be a duplication.

Sanctuary Scheme

- 18.7. Referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme have been discussed in Section 13.13 . The below section is around the outcomes of the Sanctuary Scheme.
- 18.8. The Sanctuary Scheme assessor began to complete sanctuary scheme assessments in November 2023. Below are the types of security provided with numbers:

Equipment	Total provided April 23 - March 24
Video Doorbell	14
Window Shock Alarms	5
Door Brace	4
Hasp and Padlock	1
Patlock	2
Audible Alarm	1

- 18.9. There is no data to enable the needs assessment to understand how long after the provision of Sanctuary Scheme survivors were enabled to remain in their own homes safely. However, as part of the sanctuary scheme progress, the sanctuary scheme co-ordinators gather feedback.
- 18.10. Below is some of the feedback received 3 months after support from the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme:
- Four survivors who received minor sanctuary provisions (video doorbell) said it had helped them to feel safer in their home and was happy with the service that was provided. Another survivor who received a video doorbell said they feel safer for having it and it has improved their mental health.
 - One survivor provided feedback that the door braces were helpful and have added loads more to their piece of mind, especially at night.
 - One survivor shared that they were very happy with sanctuary scheme assessment and received a video Doorbell and lights which improved their feeling of safety.
 - Some survivors shared that they found the visit very helpful and reassuring that the current security of the home was good.
 - Several survivors also included compliments to the sanctuary scheme assessor who was a very reassuring presence and was thorough in assessing their safety, exploring everything to help the client.

- 18.11. The feedback provided evidence how the sanctuary scheme has helped survivors to remain in their home and feel safe.

I cannot thank you and everyone enough for helping to 'secure' my home. It has been over 6 months since the furniture has been where it should have been - it did take me several days to put it all back in the right rooms. I no longer live in the dak, with tables, chairs, cupboards, and everything else I could move barricading all the door and windows. It has made a tremendous difference to how I'm living now, it's almost normal - I'm almost normal too. The door braces are magical and have added loads more to my piece of mind, especially at night. Assessor was brilliant and a very reassuring presence and was thorough in assessing my safety. He has thought of everything to help me cope with my present situation. This scheme is fantastic as were everyone I have spoken to since being referred, I am so very

19. Safe Accommodation Unmet Need

- 19.1. This section presents data on victims/survivors who did not/were not able to access safe accommodation.

Refuge

- 19.2. There was a total of 212 unsuccessful referrals between 2022/23 and 2023/24 (unable to be supported at all).
- 19.3. Below shows a list of common reasons for being unsuccessful/denied with numbers of clients for each:

Access denied (unable to be supported at all) reasons	Total number of clients 2022/23 and 2023/24
Client / survivor does not want support	70
No space / capacity to support	35
Unable to contact client / survivor	26
Unable to meet support needs around drug and alcohol	21

- 19.4. 69% of referrals to SDAS over 2022/23 and 2023/24, did not result in individuals/households being accepted into refuge provision, for both men and women.
- 19.5. **Recommendation:** To explore the reason why a high proportion of clients decline support after being referred into refuge service.
- 19.6. **Recommendation:** To explore the less common reasons for referrals being denied.
- 19.7. **Recommendation:** Acorns Service has been launched, so there is a need to fully explore why there are still individuals being unsuccessful/denied refuge provision due to

service being unable to meet support needs around drug and alcohol.

- 19.8. **Recommendation:** Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service to consider the recommendation in the 2022 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment around developing a plan for a new refuge whilst working with commissioners to identify the type of safe accommodation required. Partners may need to explore further the gaps in unmet need that have yet to be identified before making a final decision on this.

Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme

- 19.9. There is no data on the age of survivors that are referred to the sanctuary scheme, therefore, without a demographic breakdown, we cannot identify if there are additional barriers for some victims.
- 19.10. **Recommendation:** Sanctuary Scheme Co-ordinators to record the date of birth of clients referred into the service consistently, to provide the demographic data.
- 19.11. **Recommendation:** Domestic Abuse Prevention Team to promote the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme to various professionals to ensure they are aware of how to refer into the scheme, the criteria, and the process, to ensure that the scheme is being utilised.

Homelessness

- 19.12. The data in this section was extracted from the Housing Options Team database through a search for those coded as 'domestic abuse – victim' and 'domestic abuse' as the reasons for homelessness.

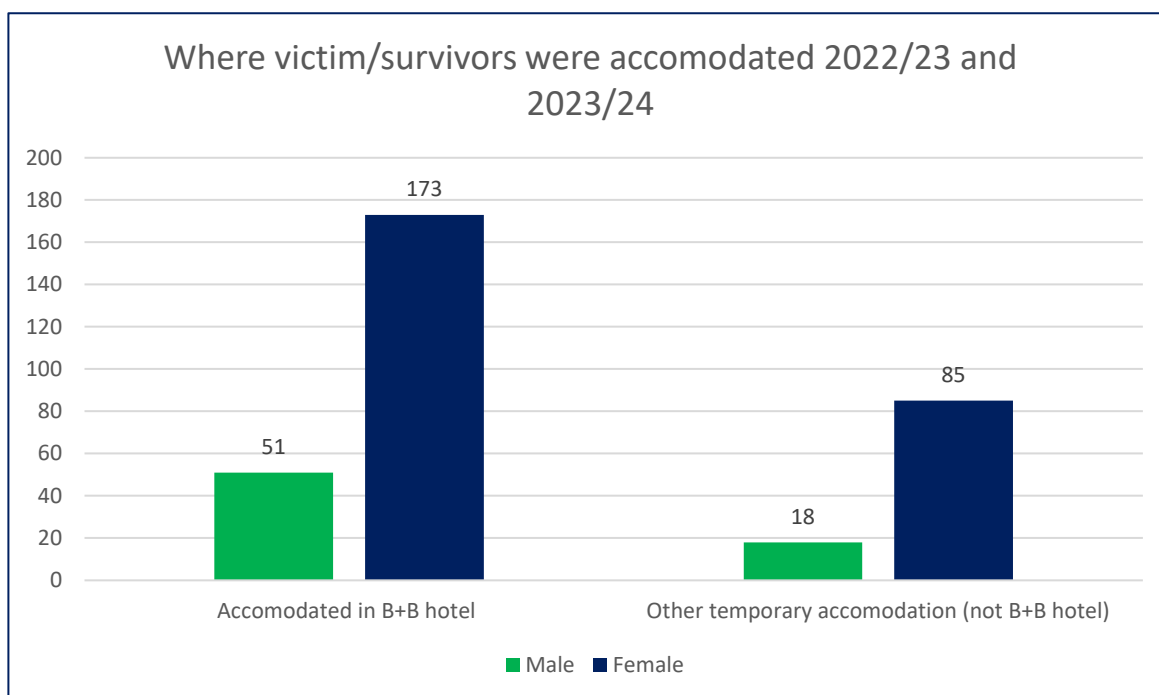
- 19.13. The total homelessness applications with domestic abuse recorded in 2022/23 and 2023/24 were as follows:

Homelessness applications with domestic abuse recorded	Female	Male	Unknown gender
2022/23	191	50	0
2023/24	250	52	1

- 19.14. All of these homelessness applications with domestic abuse recorded were accepted.
- 19.15. Part of the registration process is a local connection test. Below shows where the local connection test was applied:

Homelessness data	2022/23	2023/24
In the allocation of social housing (register) a local connection test was applied	36	47

- 19.16. It is important to establish where victims/survivors whose homelessness applications were accepted, were accommodated.



19.17. In relation to ‘other’ temporary accommodation type, survivors would be placed in, for example, a House of multiple occupancy (HMO).

19.18. Some homelessness applications come to Shropshire Council Housing Service, from out of area. Below are the top five places these applications came from, and how many applications were received, is shown below:

- Telford and Wrekin: 57 referrals
- Wrexham: 8 referrals
- Birmingham: 6 referrals
- Dudley: 5 referrals
- Walsall: 5 referrals

19.19. The tenure type of homelessness applicants who disclosed domestic abuse across 2022/23 and 2023/24 is broken down into gender below:

Housing type	2022/23		2023/24		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Unknown
Armed Forces accommodation	0	0	0	0	
Caravan / houseboat	1	1	1	0	
Council tenant	1	0	3	2	
Homeless on departure from institution: Hospital (psychiatric)	0	0	0	0	
Living with family	19	1	21	3	
Living with friends	5	3	5	2	
Looked after children placement	0	0	0	0	
No fixed abode	3	2	2	1	
No fixed abode - Has never slept rough	0	0	0	0	

No fixed abode - Has not slept rough in the last year, but has previously slept rough	0	0	0	0	
No fixed abode - Not rough sleeping on approach but has slept rough at least once in the last year	0	0	0	0	
Other	3	2	5	1	
Owner-occupier	5	0	14	0	
Private rented sector: HMO	1	0	1	1	
Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends)	0	0	0	0	
Private rented sector: self-contained	18	2	15	6	
Refuge	11	1	18	1	
Registered Provider tenant	26	1	29	2	
Rough sleeping (in judgement of assessor)	0	0	1	3	
Social rented supported housing or hostel	3	3	4	0	
Temporary accommodation	47	13	39	13	
Shared ownership	0	0	1	0	
Unknown	48	21	92	17	1 Unknown Gender 2023/24

*1 unknown gender 2023/24.

Reason For Duty Ending – Housing Applicants Who Approached With Domestic Abuse

19.20. Authorities are legally obliged to take 'reasonable steps' to try and prevent or relieve homelessness among all eligible applicants and their households. These are commonly known as the prevention, relief and main duties.

19.21. **Prevention Duty:** Section 195 of the Homelessness Reduction Act⁵¹ states that the 'prevention duty' – places a duty on housing authorities to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homelessness.

The prevention duty applies when:

- A local authority is satisfied that an applicant is threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance.
- Where an applicant is likely to become homeless in the near future but does not fall under the statutory definition of 'threatened with homelessness', local authorities are encouraged to take a flexible approach and begin to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness rather than waiting until the applicant meets the legal definition.
- The prevention duty applies regardless of an applicant's priority need. An authority might make inquiries into an applicant's priority need during the prevention duty because it is relevant to the suitability of accommodation offered to prevent homelessness. Priority need inquiries must not delay prevention work.

⁵¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/section/4#section-4-2>

- An applicant who is threatened with homelessness and eligible will be owed a prevention duty by the authority to which they apply. The local authority cannot refer the applicant to another authority at prevention stage.

19.22. **Relief Duty:** Section 189B of the Homelessness Reduction Act states “relief duty” requires housing authorities to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation

The relief duty applies when:

- A local authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance

19.23. **Main Duty:** Section 193 (2) of the Homelessness Reduction Act states housing authorities have a duty to find secure accommodation for applicants who are homeless, eligible for assistance, have priority need and are not intentionally homeless

A local authority will owe an applicant the main housing duty when the duty to relieve homelessness has ended, and they are satisfied the applicant is:

- homeless and eligible for assistance
- in priority need
- not intentionally homeless
- The duty is owed by the authority to which the application was made unless the authority makes a local connection referral.

19.24. The below tables provide a breakdown to why prevention, relief and main duty was discharged/ended for some applicants who approached with domestic abuse. The figures show the number of applicants in 2022/23 and 2023/24

Prevention Duty data 2022-2024

Prevention duty ended for those applicants who approached with DA	2022/23	2023/24		
	Female	Male	Female	Male
56 days or more expired and no further action	2	0	1	0
Contact lost	2	0	5	0
Homeless	14	2	11	1
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	0	0	0	0
Secured alternative accommodation for 12 or more months	4	0	1	0
Secured alternative accommodation for 6 months	3	0	3	3
Secured existing accommodation for 12 or more months	2	0	16	2
Secured existing accommodation for 6 months	1	0	6	1
Withdrew application / applicant deceased (Retired)	1	0	1	0

19.25. In relation to the prevention duty ended, for those applicants who approached the Housing Service with domestic abuse the most common reason for duty ending, was due to the applicant becoming homeless. This means that the applicants were not prevented from becoming homeless.

Relief Duty data 2022-2024

Relief duty ended for those applicants who approached with DA	2022/23		2023/24	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
56 days elapsed	110	26	119	27
Contact lost	14	7	18	3
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	0	1	0	0
No longer eligible	0	1	2	2
Secured accommodation for 12 months	8	1	15	1
Secured accommodation for 6 months	15	4	7	4
Withdrew application / applicant deceased (Retired)	12	5	14	2

19.26 In relation to relief duty ended, for those applicants who approached with domestic abuse to the Housing Service, the most common reason for relief duty ended was that 56 days elapsed.

Main Duty data 2022-2024

Main duty Discharge Reason	2022/23		2023/24	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Accepted a Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer	76	14	38	5
Accepted a Private Rented Sector offer	1	0	0	0
Applicant withdrew or lost contact	8	1	6	0
Ceased to occupy temporary accommodation	6	1	4	2
Refused suitable Private Rented Sector offer	5	2	10	2
Refused and/or contested the PRS offer while having accepted it	0	0	0	0
Refused suitable temporary accommodation offer	5	0	2	1

19.27 In relation to main duty discharge reason, the most common reason for duty discharged, was due to client being accepted a Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social Housing Offer.

20. Non-Accommodation Based Domestic Abuse Provision

20.1 This section provides an overview of non-accommodation based domestic abuse provision.

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service- Outreach Service

20.2. Shropshire Council commission Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) to provide a community-based outreach service. SDAS work in partnership with local agencies to enable victims and children/young people to regain the strength and confidence to take control of their lives and to have a future without fear. They seek funding and apply for grants, to increase the capacity of the outreach service, for both the one-to-one outreach support and the delivery of group work.

20.3. The outreach service provides dedicated support via face-to-face meetings, telephone, text, or email according to need and individual choice. SDAS community-based support have noted that clients are wanting more telephone support than face to face. There are 3 full-time equivalent outreach workers and 2 part time outreach workers providing one-to-one, group and survivor support. There is also one IDVA whose workload is high risk cases and two full time equivalent staff to oversee triage and single point of entry.

Data 2022-2024

20.4. The SDAS community-based support received 848 referrals for adult victim/survivors in 2022-2023 and 1069 referrals in 2023/24. This is a 26% increase from one year to the next.

20.5. The top three referral sources for SDAS outreach services are as follows:

Referral source	% of referrals in 2022-2023	% of referrals in 2023-24
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	27%	27%
Self	22%	28%
Local authority Children Services- social care	12%	7%

20.6. SDAS received 1917 referrals in the period between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Approximately 64% (1240) of all referrals were accepted and 36% (677) of referrals were declined.

20.7. The most common reason for decline (27%) was the client/survivor did not want support. It is therefore imperative to explore why the service is declined, after a client has given consent for a referral to be made to the service.

Reason for not being accepted	% of declined referrals in 2022-24
Unable to contact client/survivor	21%
Client/survivor does not want support	27%
Other	21%

20.8. Whilst clients are on the waiting list for SDAS Outreach Service, all support officers operate a rota to ensure clients are contacted once a fortnight.

20.9. Top five types of support provided by SDAS Outreach Service:

Types of support	Number of supports provided to adults 2022-24
Emotional support	853
Referral and Signposting	805
Other	791
Practical support	699
Children support	506

20.10. Recently SDAS has had to pause new referrals for their outreach service due to being unable to meet the high demand and long waiting lists.

20.11. **Suggestions from SDAS Workers:**

- Explore having a mental health specialist worker within SDAS for both refuge and community.
- More training to be provided for professionals to complete a DASH risk assessment.
- To increase professionals understanding around if they are working with a client and have gathered information about the client's journey they need to include this detail in the referral form to Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service, to ensure that the survivor does not have to repeat themselves to different agencies.

West Mercia Women's Aid

20.12. West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) operates across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin. Their mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in West Mercia. This is done by providing support, protection and prevention services that empower those affected by violence and abuse to rebuild their lives and those of their children.

West Mercia Women's Aid Helpline and Online Support

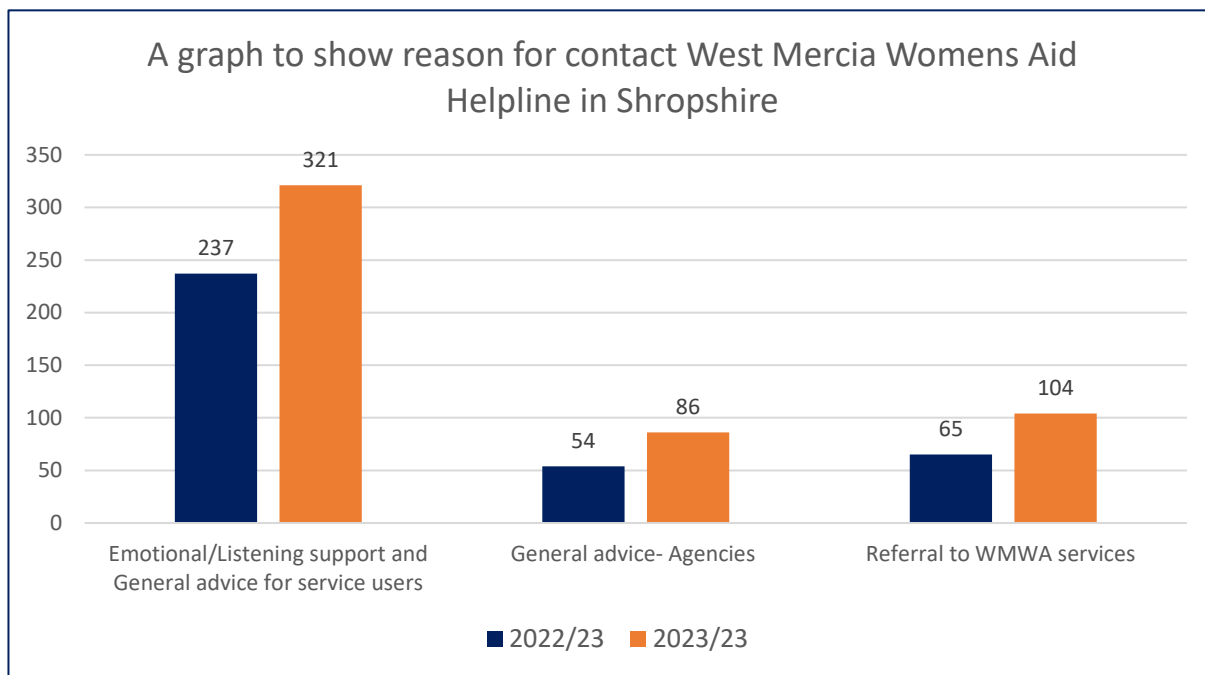
20.13. WMWA has a confidential helpline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They talk with survivors about their individual situation and the various types of help and support available. West Mercia Women's Aid also offer support online.

Data 2022-2024

20.14. The table below shows the number of contacts received via helpline and online support for Shropshire during 2022/23 and 2023/24.

	2022/23	2023/24
Helpline	220	299
Online Contact	136	212

20.15. WMWA also provided the reasons for contacts in 2022/23 and 2023/24 which is shown below.



20.16. The most common reason of contact in 2022/23 and 2023/24 was for emotional/listening support and general advice. It is important to note that 169 contacts were for a referral to WMWA services.

West Mercia Women's Aid Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA)

20.17. West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) have a range of specialist support including an IDVA service. An IDVA is a specialist trained, domestic abuse safety worker, who supports people who are at high risk of immediate and significant harm from domestic abuse. They work with all gender victims/survivors. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) commission WMWA to deliver the IDVA contract in West Mercia including in Shropshire.

20.18. The WMWA IDVA service receives referrals for all clients at high risk in Shropshire, except for those already working with SDAS when they become high risk. If SDAS receive a referral and the individual has already been identified as high risk, they will ensure this is sent on to WMWA and will not make contact.

20.19. Within the IDVA team, there are specialist IDVAs including:

- Inclusion IDVA: ensures that underrepresented groups can access a service.
- Children and Young people IDVA
- Hospital IDVA

Data 2022-2024

20.20. Below shows the total number of referrals received and accepted to West Mercia West Mercia Women's Aid

West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals received	293	303
Total referrals accepted	154	145
Total repeat referrals	199	162

20.21. In relation to referrals that were declined, below is a list of the reasons with numbers for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Reasons for referrals not being accepted (with numbers):	2022/23	2023/24
Client/survivor does not want support	33	31
Unable to contact client/survivor	24	43
Already supported by SDAS	40	46
Needs better met elsewhere - referred to YPIDVA	2	0
Needs better met elsewhere - in refuge	2	2
Needs better met elsewhere - already supported by DV agency	0	5
Already active in service	19	13
Duplicate referral	6	11
Moved out of area	0	3
Other	13	4

West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA service-referrals came from out of area	2022/23	2023/24
1 Telford & Wrekin	7	9
2 Herefordshire	2	3
3 Worcestershire	2	4

West Mercia Women's Aid Hospital IDVA

20.22. WMWAs Hospital IDVA is there to promote visibility to A&E, maternity, outpatients, and the wards. They receive a series of cases, not only high risk, but also some lower risk who may need some advice, safety planning and then signposting on. Some may be starting to recognise the abuse they are being subjected to and may have made a disclosure. The hospital IDVA works closely with the vulnerable midwife team; they have completed joint visits into a refuge with some midwives.

Data 2022-2024

20.23. Below shows the total number of referrals received and accepted to West Mercia Women's Aid Hospital IDVA service for 2022/23 and 2023/24

West Mercia Women's Aid Hospital IDVA	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals received *	72	70
Total referrals accepted *	40	36
Total number of repeat referrals	19	20

*It is not recorded whether referral is patient or staff

20.24. **Recommendation:** To explore the repeat referrals to WMWA Hospital IDVA service, to better understand the reason for multiple repeats.

20.25. In relation to referrals that were declined, below is a list of the reasons with numbers for 2022/23 and 2023/24

Reasons for referrals not being accepted (with numbers):	2022/23	2023/24
Client/Survivor does not want support	3	7
Unable to contact	10	13
Already active in service	7	3
Moved out of area	3	1
Duplicate referral	7	7
Supported by SDAS	1	1
Ineligible for support (borough)	0	1
Other	1	1

20.26. In terms of the referral sources to West Mercia Women's Aid IDVA:

Referral sources West Mercia Women's Aid hospital IDVA	2022/23	2023/24
A&E	45	30
Maternity	5	9
Ward	2	3
Mental Health	0	2
Department unknown	20	26
Self	0	0

20.27. Some referrals come from out of area and the top areas are outlined below:

West Mercia Women's Aid Hospital IDVA - Total referrals that came from out of area	2022/23	2023/24
1 Telford & Wrekin	5	8
2 Powys	5	2

Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

20.28. A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on victims at the highest risk of serious harm or murder due to domestic abuse.

20.29. The MARAC process is coordinated by West Mercia Police and chaired by the MARAC Coordinator for Shropshire who is part of the Protecting Vulnerable People Unit of West Mercia Police. The police internally fund the MARAC Coordinator role.

20.30. Meetings are monthly and held in person. Around 30 cases are heard every month. Once 30 cases are listed on the agenda no more are accepted, and any additional cases are rolled over to the following month.

20.31. MARAC is attended by representatives of local agencies such as police and health. It is well supported and attended across the Partnership by many practitioners who feel the meetings are organised well and believe meeting face to face is extremely beneficial in terms of involvement in the meetings.

Data 2022-2024

20.32. Below shows MARAC referrals which were received, accepted and repeat referrals for 2022/23 and 2023/24

MARAC	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals	290	287
Total referrals accepted	290	287
Total referrals that are repeat referrals	114	118

20.33. Compared to the last needs assessment, there has been a 6% increase in the repeat referral rate in the Shropshire MARAC.

20.34. The table below shows the top referral sources to the Shropshire MARAC between 2022 and 2024.

Referral sources (list with numbers):	% of referrals 2022/23 & 2023/24 (N=577)
West Mercia Police	68.5%
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS)	10.6%
Health - A&E	7.1%
IDVA (West Mercia Women's Aid)	5.0%
Local Authority Children's Services - Early Help	2.1%
Other (name) Probation	1.7%
Mental Health - Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust	mpft1.4%
Health – GP	0.5%
Local Authority Adult Social Care	0.3%
Education – School	0.2%
Other - LGBT Foundation	0.2%

20.35. There were no referrals across the two years from:

- Health- community health services
- Health community children services
- Local authority children's services- social care
- Local authority Housing and Homelessness

20.36. Low referrals from these partner services suggests a more passive relationship with the MARAC, in which information about victims/perpetrators is received and responded to by

20.37. services, but lacking active referring-in.

20.38. Services have provided feedback around MARAC, sharing that they find the MARAC co-ordinator easy to contact and extremely helpful if they have any questions when making a referral to MARAC. The majority shared that they find the MARAC meetings well organised and productive however, the duration of MARAC meetings was mentioned as being too long. A suggestion was made that there could be 2 meetings a month to lessen the time.

20.39. **Recommendation:** Safe Lives provides toolkits for MARAC representatives, as well as a guide to the MARAC process, MARAC representatives should circulate this, to their service.

20.40. **Recommendation:** To explore options of multiple meetings a month to lessen the length of time per meeting.

20.41. **Recommendation:** Complete a review of MARAC and the whole system approach.

20.42. West Mercia Police data provided for this needs assessment included information regarding MARAC referrals, highlighting that in Quarter 4 of 2022/23 68 referrals were heard at Shropshire MARAC:

- 72 children were living at the address.
- 53 children were not.

Moreover, in Q4 of 2023/24 70 referrals were heard at Shropshire MARAC

- 73 children were living at the address.
- 61 children were not.
- 8 vulnerable adults

20.43. The following table compares the Shropshire MARAC data for 2022/23 with the national Safe Lives data 2022/23⁵² as well as the West Mercia MARAC data for the year ending March 2023:

MARAC Measure	Shropshire MARAC (April 2022/ March 23)	Safe Lives UK Average (April 2022-March 2023)	West Mercia MARAC (Year ending March 2023)
Number of cases	290	118,140	1,242
Number of repeat cases	114	38,966	307
% of repeat referrals	39%	33%	25%
% Where police were source of referrals	69%	66%	63%

20.44. This comparison suggests that the Shropshire MARAC is in line with the England and Wales averages across most measures, except Shropshire has a slightly higher

⁵² <https://safelives.org.uk/research-policy/practitioner-datasets/marac-data/>

percentage of repeat referrals. Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour, and as such cases are often referred to MARAC more than once. According to Safe Lives for an established MARAC the expected level would be in the range of 28-40%". Therefore, Shropshire's repeat referrals are in the range expected.

- 20.45. The rate of police referrals to Shropshire MARAC are in line with the Safe Lives⁵³ expected figures of between 60-75%.
- 20.46. Nationally, Safe Lives collect MARAC data on the number of males referred and the number of children discussed within the cases. This is not collected in Shropshire. Safe lives outline the total number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult women is 47. This is above the rate of cases Safe Lives expect to see (40 cases per 10,000) based on their estimate of the prevalence of high-risk domestic abuse. However, this figure is an average, with some MARACs seeing much lower and some much higher rates.
- 20.47. In Shropshire, MARAC is well regarded and well attended, however some of the stakeholder feedback, suggests some partners are involved in the MARAC in a passive way, by receiving cases and checking systems, but not identifying victims at high-risk and referring them in or having regular attendance at the monthly meetings.
- 20.48. **Recommendation:** More training and information sharing in relation to what MARAC is, how to refer into MARAC as a professional – Shropshire Community health recognised they had a lack of awareness around MARAC and would like to receive training.
- 20.49. **Recommendation:** For a representative from adult services to consistently attend MARAC meetings.

Victim Support

- 20.50. Victim Support is an independent charity that provides specialist support to victims of crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales. Victim Support is committed to helping people to cope and move forward to feel they are back on track with their lives.
- 20.51. Victim Support provides, free and confidential emotional and practical help to people affected by crime in West Mercia, including Shropshire. They support victim/survivors of domestic abuse to explore their options and put a plan in place to safeguard and support them and their family. Survivors can contact for support regardless of whether they have contacted the police, and no matter how long ago the crime took place.
- 20.52. Victim support provides emotional support, information, and signposting. They can put survivors in touch with other agencies which may help with issues around housing, benefits, and legal advice.

⁵³ [Safe lives \(2024\) Marac data by police force area, region, and country \(England and Wales\) 2022-23 data](#)

Data 2022-2024

20.53. The data below, from Victim Support, shows the number of referrals received, accepted declined and repeated between 2022/33 & 2023/24.

Victim support measure (2022/23 & 2023/2024)	Adults	Children	Total
Number of referrals received	125	18	143
Number of referrals accepted	95	16	111
Number of referrals not accepted	30	2	32
Number of repeat referrals	2	0	N/A

20.54. Those "not accepted" were closed for reasons such as duplicate cases, insufficient contact details available or attempted contact several times but were unsuccessful.

20.55. As Victim Support cover the whole of West Mercia and have services in many parts of the UK, they are able to transfer cases to other areas if needed.

20.56. At time of data collection, Victim Support was unable to extract the sources of referral for all 143 cases, it was recorded for just 23. Out of these 23 cases, 19 were Self-referral, 1 was from West Mercia Police and 3 were from the Witness Service.

20.57. The Victim Support Service Manager chairs the Under-Represented Communities Group that was initiated by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, bringing West Mercia victim-focused (not just domestic abuse) services together to increase understanding of and engage better with communities.

Victim Advice Line

20.58. Victim Advice Line (VAL) is a free confidential service provided by West Mercia Police and funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

20.59. They work with survivors to understand exactly what kind of help and support they need. Survivors are assigned a care coordinator to ensure all needs are met, and that the survivor always has someone to talk to. The care coordinator will agree a specially tailored support package with the survivor, which may include relevant advice booklets, contact numbers for counselling or other support services, help with insurance forms and guidance through the Criminal Justice process.

20.60. **Suggestion from Victim Advice Line:** Better information around what support each local service provides and for all professionals to be kept up to date of how to refer people into different support services.

Axis

20.61. Axis is an independent charity operating within Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and the immediate surrounding area. They provide free, confidential, and independent services for people aged over 11, who have been subjected to any form of sexual abuse (including, but not limited to childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or rape).

Axis Counselling

20.62. Axis Counselling provide specialist counselling & support, which is delivered by counsellors who are specifically trained to work with sexual trauma via induction training and as part of their continued professional development (CPD) programme.

20.63. As well as specialising in working with sexual trauma, Axis also has counsellors who are specifically trained to work with: Children & Young people, Males, and people with Learning Disabilities.

20.64. They will work with a client to establish their needs and what kind of counselling or support would be most helpful to the client. They offer a range of support therapies including:

- Pre-trial counselling
- LINK counselling
- Trauma focused counselling
- Fast Track counselling
- Groups and workshops
- TORWA: Taste of recovery with Axis (online self-help programme)

For more information around the different types of support therapies provided by Axis Counselling outlined above please see [here](#).

Data 2022-2024

20.65. Axis provided data on the number of accepted and declined referrals for 2022/23 and 2023/24

Axis counselling measure	2022/23	2023/24
Number of referrals received	294	218
Number of repeat referrals	38	16

*All referrals to axis counselling were accepted in 2022/23 and 2023/24

20.66. There was a decrease in referrals in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23.

20.67. In the previous Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs assessment in 2022, it was reported that in 2020/21 and 2021/22 Axis received 176 referrals for counselling where domestic abuse was a factor. This shows a 190% increase in referrals to Axis Counselling since the last needs assessment.

20.68. Top five referral sources to Axis Counselling are below:

Referral sources (list with numbers):	% of referrals 2022/23 & 2023/24
Self-referral	47%
Other- ISVA	20.3%
Other- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)	5.4%
Health- Community adult services	4.9%
Mental Health	3.5%

Axis ISVA service

20.69. Axis has an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service which is a specialist one to one support service for all survivors of sexual abuse.

20.70. This service includes a team of ISVAs who are trained to provide practical support as well as free impartial information and advice. The role of the ISVA involves providing support through the criminal justice system and Axis have strong links with the police.

20.71. There is specialist Children and Young People (CYP) ISVAs to provide support to 11–17-year-olds who have been subjected to any form of sexual abuse.

20.72. Axis also has a Family ISVA who supports parents, siblings, partners, and sometimes other family members to understand what is happening and how it is affecting the individual, and to understand how to support them to cope and recover.

Data 2022-2024

20.73. Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, 190 referrals were made to the Axis ISVA Service.

ISVA - Axis Counselling (where DA is a factor)	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals received	113	77
Total referrals accepted	109	74
Total repeat referrals	10	3

20.74. 7 referrals to Axis ISVA were not accepted and this was due to inappropriate referral for service.

20.75. Top five referral sources to Axis ISVA service are as follows:

Referral sources (list with numbers):	% of referrals 2022/23 & 2023/24 (N=190)
West Mercia Police	39%
Self	11.6%
SARC	7.9%
IDVA West Mercia Women's Aid	6.8%
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service	4.3%

20.76. Axis have recently launched The Pathfinder project. This project is a newly funded service, by NHS England, supporting individuals aged 18 and over, affected by sexual

violence/abuse who are presenting with complex mental health and/or other comorbid factors, preventing them from processing their trauma.

20.77. This service launched in November 2023 and started seeing clients in February 2024.

20.78. The Pathfinder service offers:

- 1 to 1 Stabilisation (including advocacy, emotional support, and practical advice)
- 3 Levels of groups
- Stabilisation counselling 6-8 sessions
- Psychologist formulation and support
- Essential sexual violence specialist training programmes for professionals who work with individuals affected by sexual violence awareness raising, managing disclosures, sexual violence trauma informed practice.

20.79. The Pathfinder is a short-term intervention to help a client stabilise, ensuring their ability to go on and engage in whatever service they need to.

Parental Educational Growth Support (PEGS)

20.80. Parental Educational Growth Support (PEGS) is a social enterprise set up to support parents, carers and guardians who are subjected to Child to Parent Abuse (CPA), including those with adult offspring. PEGS is not designed to support children causing harm, or their siblings, it is parent focused and parent/caregiver led.

20.81. PEGS have developed a range of virtual services for parents to access from anywhere in the UK. These consist of:

- Virtual Drop Ins – multiple each week at different times during the day and evening. Parents can access daily, and they are led by the prep team.
- Peer Support group
- EPIC Sessions – online ‘Empowering Parents In Crisis’ sessions
- One to one support
- Bespoke workshops- For example, a two-part resilience workshop.

20.82. PEGS also train frontline professionals to recognise and effectively respond to CPA, and work with national and regional organisations to develop and implement policies. PEGS also run a free professional drop in, every month, where professionals can come learn about the organisation and how to refer in.

Data 2022-24

20.83. In 2022/23 and 2023/24 PEGS received 291 referrals from victims/survivors in Shropshire.

PEGS	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals received	107	184

20.84. PEGS have had no repeat referrals as parents choose to remain connected via the peer support and drop-in sessions and all referrals were accepted.

20.85. Top referral sources to PEGS are as follows:

Referral sources (list with numbers):	% of referrals 2022/23 & 2023/24 (N=291)
Self	17.2%
Local Authority - Early Help	5.8%
Education- School	3.4%
Mental Health- Other	3.4%
Local Authority Childrens Services - Social care	2.1%

20.86. PEGS provide a necessary specialist support pathway for parents and carers being subjected to violence and abuse from their children. The support they require is different to those subjected to abuse or violence from an intimate partner, and this need must be recognised across the Partnership to ensure referrals are made appropriately.

20.87. PEGS are a unique and valued service in Shropshire. Many stakeholders are becoming increasingly aware of child and adolescent to parent violence/abuse, adult family violence and recognising that victims/survivors require a specialist response that is different from domestic abuse specialist services.

20.88. However, PEGS is not funded for Shropshire. The needs assessment heard that in some cases, survivors from Shropshire who reach out to PEGS for support are not involved with any other service.

20.89. As PEGS do not support children causing harm, they are working closely with Bright Star Boxing who can offer young people access to their services.

20.90. In 2019, Bright Star Boxing started the Bright Star Futures programme. They use boxing, education and mentoring to inspire, engage and connect with young people to drive achievement and positive behaviour changes in every young person referred to them. Alternative provision is offered across Telford & Wrekin, Wolverhampton, and the West Midlands. PEGS have received positive feedback from clients when referring to Bright Star. There is a pathway in place as both PEGS and Bright Star saw that there was a need and a programme has been developed, however funding cannot be secured.

20.91. In 2022, PEGS completed a parental survey⁵⁴. They found that 68% of parents didn't feel well supported by professionals and 85% of parents shared they considered calling a professional and then changed their mind. Reasons for this include, they didn't know who to call or that they thought professionals would think it was their fault.

⁵⁴ [PEGS \(2022\) The impact of child to parent abuse: who does it affect and how?](#)

20.92. PEGS informed the Needs Assessment that awareness around the SSCP Policy on child to parent abuse in the County is low.

20.93. **Recommendation:** for each service to circulate the child to parent abuse policy to all professionals.

Cranstoun

20.94. Cranstoun is a national provider delivering services for adults and young people facing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, domestic abuse, housing, and criminal justice. Domestic Abuse services offered by Cranstoun, in West Mercia, includes the delivery of an all-risk Perpetrator programme in Shropshire via two programmes: DRIVE and Men and Masculinities. Cranstoun work with the Perpetrator and West Mercia Women's Aid are funded to provide the partner support.

Drive Programme

20.95. The Drive programme started in Shropshire in October 2023 and is a collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse. It involves liaising with police officers, support agencies, caseworkers and directly with those presenting abusive, challenging, and violent behaviour.

20.96. Drive's aims are as follows:

- To reduce the number of repeat and new victims.
- To reduce the harm caused to victims and children.
- To reduce the number of serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- To intervene earlier, to protect families living with domestic abuse.

20.97. Drive works with high-harm, high-risk and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse, incorporating intensive one-to-one work and case management. A Drive case manager works with the perpetrator to challenge and support changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. This often requires addressing additional needs such as mental health, substance misuse and housing.

20.98. This intervention involves a coordinated multi-agency response to disrupt opportunities for perpetrators to continue their abuse and identify and reduce risk. There is also an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) who provides support for the victim/survivor to ensure joined up working and safety.

20.99. Drive does not require the direct engagement of perpetrators and where perpetrators refuse to engage, they are still able to reduce risk.

Data October 2023- March 2024

Drive measurements	October 2023- March 2024
Number of referrals received	24

20.100. All 24 referrals came from MARAC, none were rejected and there were no repeats.

20.101. Data provided around the Drive service users from January 2024- March 2024 indicates that 85% of service users were identified as serial perpetrators and 77% had crime or non-crime police incidents relating to domestic abuse.

Men and Masculinities

20.102. The Men & Masculinities programme provides a safe space for people who have engaged in abusive, harmful, and damaging behaviour within their relationships. The programme explores what it means to display appropriate behaviour within relationships and highlights how conflict, aggression and anger can deeply impact the lives of others. The 24-week programme focuses on the harmful behaviour.

Data 2022-24

Men and Masculinities measurement	2023/2024
Number of referrals received	55

20.103. All referrals were accepted with the top referrers to Men and masculinities being:

Referral sources	% of referrals 2023/24
Local Authority Children's Services- Social Care	29.1%
West Mercia Police	21.8%
IDVA - West Mercia Women's Aid	1.8%
Local Authority – Early help	1.8%

Willowdene Rehabilitation

20.104. Willowdene provides an inclusive, safe environment where people can identify, acknowledge, and tackle the issues of their past so that they can understand their present, and build their future. This is provided through rehabilitation, which includes trauma-informed therapy, training, work-experience, residential options, and resettlement.

20.105. Originally Willowdene operated as a male-only site but is now a mixed facility operating a female-only residential option with 12 dedicated bed spaces. Referrals come through probation, direct from prison, through drug and alcohol pathways, the LINC programme and Liaison and Diversion routes.

21. Partnership Responses and Provision

West Mercia Police

21.1. West Mercia Police (WMP) serves 1.19 million people across Worcestershire, Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, and Herefordshire.

- 21.2. They serve both the community and staff and work in partnership with a wide range of other statutory and voluntary sector organisations, including community and advocacy groups. The local and strategic Independent Advisory Groups are a key route allowing the police to engage with their communities.
- 21.3. WMP value listening carefully to their diverse stakeholders and consulting on the potential impacts of their decision making or policies, particularly as they may affect different 'protected characteristics' and those from under-represented groups.
- 21.4. The force provides an enhanced service to victims of domestic abuse who are assessed as being at the greatest risk of harm. A force wide team, the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) team, is in place covering all aspects of vulnerability, including domestic abuse with a Strategic Lead (Detective Sergeant) covering the whole force. As part of the PVP team, Domestic Abuse Risk Officers (DAROs) are in each of the local policing areas (LPAs) to provide oversight and support safety planning and investigations relating to victims assessed as high and medium risk. Specialist investigators are in place to lead high-risk investigations. DAROs will review all reported incidents assessed as high risk, and will dip sample the medium risk cases, but will not look at standard risk cases.
- 21.5. The force is actively engaged in the local MARACs where multi-agency support and safety planning for victims assessed as high-risk is provided.
- 21.6. The force previously used the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour Based abuse (DASH) risk assessment when considering the risk of harm to domestic abuse victims but now the force uses the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA). The DARA was developed by the College of Policing in consultation with survivors, frontline police officers, voluntary and charity sector support services, and leading academics, the DARA aims to make it easier to identify coercive control. There are 18 questions asked, and after considering the answers, officers assess the risk as standard, medium, or high, and then take appropriate action.
- 21.7. When the neighbourhood policing teams attend a domestic abuse incident, they complete a DARA. If the outcome is a medium risk management plan, they are managed by the Safer Neighbourhood Team and if they are high risk, a designated officer manages them. Additionally, an auto-transfer is made to the Victim Advice Line, as outlined above. For victims reporting and assessed as a standard risk, who have no children and no care and support needs, this is the only opportunity for receiving any support.
- 21.8. The active promotion of equality of opportunity, inclusion and diversity is a fundamental enabler of WMP's vision, values, and priorities. The West Mercia Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy (2024-2025⁵⁵) puts in place mechanisms to ensure diversity, equality and inclusion is embedded in all aspects of their decision-making,

⁵⁵ West Mercia Police (2024) [Diversity, Equality and Inclusion \(DEI\) Strategy](#)

policy and practice. One objective is to map out and strengthen partnership working, focussing on key themes, and policing strategies linked to issues such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, including Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation.

Partnership Integrated Triage (PIT STOP) Meetings

21.9. PIT STOP has recently been launched in Shropshire and aims to provide a streamlined and robust offer of early help to children and families.

It is a multi-agency meeting, chaired by a Specialist Police Decision maker and attended by partners such as Childrens Services, Health, Education, DA services and more. Police decide which cases require the Partnership Triage and then send the list to the PIT STOP attendees to pull together any information that they have. Within the meeting, partner agencies will then share proportionate and relevant information to understand the holistic experience and level of needs for a child and family and ensure the right support can be offered. For further information on the PIT STOP Model please follow this link:

[Partnership Integrated Triage \(PIT STOP\) | Local Government Association.](#)

Feedback from this Needs Assessment suggested that Schools should be brought onboard with PITSTOP.

21.10. **Recommendation:** To revise when PIT STOP information gets released to attendees, this often comes in the day before PITSTOP, however some professionals would benefit from having the information earlier in the day to have more time to prepare for the meeting.

Shropshire Council

21.11. There are a series of different departments and services within Shropshire Council that are relevant to the Partnership response to domestic abuse, which are essential to create an effective response.

Human Resources (HR) and Staff Wellbeing:

21.12. The Wellbeing Officer has worked alongside HR and the Domestic Abuse Prevention team, with a focus on internal employees and domestic abuse. They have:

- Continued to review and refresh a directory of support services in Shropshire for anyone seeking help about domestic abuse.
- Worked to raise awareness amongst staff of domestic abuse and how to get support.
- Supported the revision of the Staff Domestic Abuse Policy, which has been reviewed considering Shropshire Councils Housing Service, DAHA accreditation journey.
- Helped to create a group of Domestic Abuse Support Officers within the council, to provide support to any colleague needing support as a victim/survivor or perpetrator.
- It is important to note that Shropshire Council are members of the Employers Initiative Domestic Abuse⁵⁶.

⁵⁶ <https://www.eida.org.uk/>

- Shropshire Council have also made a pledge to the to ensure their service is welcoming and inclusive to the LGBT+ aging community. These pledges take the form of a Covenant.⁵⁷
- Shropshire Council have also become White Ribbon⁵⁸ Accredited Organisation in July 2023 marking their commitment to preventing harassment, abuse and violence against women and girls through promoting gender equality, raising awareness and ensuring that men as well as women are part of the solution.

Shropshire Council Public Health

- 21.13. Public health is about helping to stop people getting ill from conditions that can be prevented, such as those caused by weight or smoking. It's also about helping people manage long-term health conditions preventing them becoming worse. The social determinants of health, also known as the wider determinants of health, are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. They include social, cultural, political, economic, commercial, and environmental factors.
- 21.14. A Senior public health consultant sits on the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, working to strengthen the links with domestic abuse in relation to suicide, mental health, substance misuse and sexual health. Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead sits on the West Mercia Sexual Abuse and Violence Board on behalf of Public Health and is responsible for any work coming from it.
- 21.15. Other than the Healthy Lives team, who are delivering the Social Prescribing offer, and the Community Wellbeing team, Public Health does not directly provide a direct client service. These team members have recently completed domestic abuse training delivered by Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Training Lead.
- 21.16. **Recommendation:** To review if Public Health can collect data, from the delivery of their Public Health programmes, on domestic abuse need.

Shropshire Council Childrens Social Care and Safeguarding

- 21.17. This section encompasses all areas of Children's Services: Early Help and Support teams (E-HAST), Assessment and Case Management, Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) teams, Children Looked After (CLA) services, which includes residential care and support in the community, and Leaving Care support services for children and young people.
- 21.18. Children's Services is represented at the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board however attendance is sporadic.

Shropshire Council Early Help

⁵⁷ <https://www.lgbtsand.com/projects/embrace/covenant/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/organisations>

- 21.19. 'Early help' refers to support for children and families to help identify and address problems before they arise or escalate, preventing them getting to crisis point. It's not a single service, but a network of non-statutory services and processes delivered by the local authority, and partners including the NHS, schools, and voluntary sector organisations, providing a short intervention.
- 21.20. They work closely with families to make sure they get the right support at the right time. Their overall goal is to strengthen relationships in communities through working together, combining their ideas with other services to help families in Shropshire. The principles of Early Help align with the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)⁵⁹ legislation, emphasising collaboration, a strengths-based approach, considering the whole family, and intervening early.
- 21.21. Targeted Early Help services in Shropshire are focused on six local hubs across the county with Family Practitioners as lead professionals, coordinating multi-agency responses for families. Work can be for 6-12 months, or longer when situations are complex.

Operation Encompass

- 21.22. Operation Encompass⁶⁰ aims to reduce the long-term impacts of domestic abuse by providing early intervention and support. When the police attend incidents of domestic violence or abuse where children are directly or indirectly involved, they notify the designated safeguarding lead at the child's school before the start of the next school day. The safeguarding lead then makes sure the child gets the immediate support that they need, known as Operation Encompass.
- 21.23. A Domestic Abuse Education Coordinator manages the Operation Encompass process for Shropshire. The coordinator receives the list of incidents from West Mercia Police Harm Assessment Unit (all levels) each morning, identifies a child's school, and sends a notification.
- 21.24. The purpose of Operation Encompass notifications is to inform schools as quickly as possible if there has been a Police incident. The notifications go out to the designated safeguarding leads at school. If a case is assessed by the Police as a Level 2 then the cases are triaged, and it goes to PIT STOP.
- 21.25. If headteachers have got an up-to-date, pertinent piece of information, they can e-mail that to a specific e-mail address, and this can then be added to the PITSTOP meeting.
- 21.26. Operation Encompass and Early Years: Information is passed to the early years safeguarding officer in the same way as the Education Coordinator, who will check which setting the child is in and if the setting has registered to receive the notifications. To

⁵⁹ [Working together to safeguard children \(2023\)](#)

⁶⁰ <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/wsi/watch-schemes-initiatives/oe/operation-encompass/>

register the setting needs to share with parents that they are part of the scheme, and they need to provide a restricted email address. The safeguarding officer will then send an operation encompass notification to the secure email address and will log on the education system that the notification has been sent. The safeguarding officer will then inform the police of the notifications sent.

- 21.27. **Recommendation:** regular full reviews of the operation Encompass protocol and PITSTOP meetings.

Children in Care Council (CiCC)

- 21.28. The CiCC is a small group of young people currently being supported by Children's Services and the Virtual School. The aim of the group is to help make sure services and support available for Children Looked After (CLA) work for children and young people (CYP). It provides a chance for CYP to tell the Corporate Parenting Panel how Shropshire's service can be improved.

Stepping Stones

- 21.29. Stepping Stones is a project that works with families with children on the edge of care or who are working towards reunification. Consent led outreach workers work intensely with families (up to 6 days a week dependent on need) within a therapeutic approach which is trauma informed.
- 21.30. Stepping stones outreach workers, work and collaborate with the child's social worker and partner agencies. On the first visit to the family stepping stones discuss what areas they want support with, and their view of what needs to change and regularly review progress.
- 21.31. Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service have co-located a specialist children and young persons (CYP) worker into the project, to provide direct support to those CYP affected by domestic abuse within their household or own intimate partner relationship.
- 21.32. In terms of the outcomes and impact of the work undertaken, there has been improvements in safer home environments, families supported to improve home conditions, increase in school attendance, decrease in criminal exploitation and children and young people being able to talk more about their emotions and articulate how they feel.

Emergency Social Work Team

- 21.33. The Emergency Social Work team respond when there is serious concern for the welfare of a child, or there is a request or an apparent need for a child to be accommodated by the Local Authority. They also respond when no other 'appropriate adult' can be found for the purpose of a Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) interview and to any other crisis that, in the opinion of the social worker on duty, warrants a response from the team.

- 21.34. **Recommendation:** Specialist domestic abuse training for those working with children and families should be implemented, with attendance mandatory and monitored; refresher training should be planned. Domestic abuse training should be part of induction training for all new staff.

Shropshire Council Adult Social Care and Safeguarding

- 21.35. Shropshire Council's Adult Social Care department consists of social work community teams, who support adults including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and older people. There are various teams such as the Mental Health Team, the Hospital Social Care Team and an Out of Hours service. Each team works alongside the adult safeguarding team and raises domestic abuse concerns to them.

- 21.36. In addition to responding to safeguarding concerns over domestic abuse, the safeguarding team are involved in the MARAC process and work with the Harm Assessment Unit. MARAC attendance is not consistent, and the MARAC Chair would like to see this improved. Adult Social Care is represented on the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board although attendance is sporadic.

- 21.37. Please see below for Adult Safeguarding's domestic abuse data. When looking through this we need to be aware that these numbers only represent the cases that progressed to safeguarding, and not all contact regarding a domestic abuse concern.

Adult Safeguarding Cases involving Domestic Abuse	2022/23	2023/24
Total records open with domestic abuse recorded as Victim/Survivor	312	280
Individuals with safeguarding enquires progressed with DA recorded as victim	271	229
Total safeguarding made with DA recorded as perpetrator	81	107

- 21.38. The below table shows the total safeguarding's raised that came from out of area.

Top 5 places safeguarding came from out of area and how many:	2022/23	2023/24
1	Wolverhampton (4)	Wolverhampton (7)
2	Telford and Wrekin (2)	Powys (2)
3	Powys (1)	Telford and Wrekin (1)
4	Hereford (1)	Wrexham (1)
5	Plymouth (1)	Cheshire East (1)

- 21.39. Referral/contact sources for domestic abuse concerns to adult social care for 2022/23 and 2023/24 are as follows:

Referral / contact sources for DA concerns	2022/23	2023/24
Anonymous	19	7
Education – Other	1	2
Education – School	1	0

Health - A&E	1	2
Health - community adult health services	2	0
Health – GP	40	32
Health - other hospital	24	27
Health - West Midlands Ambulance Service	19	13
Local Authority Adult Services - Social Care	40	42
Local Authority Housing & Homelessness	10	8
Mental Health – Other	14	16
Self	4	5
West Mercia Police	53	42
Care Provider	26	20
Adult Day Services	1	1
Other - Friends/Family	31	31
Other – Unknown	26	29
Other – Probation	0	3

21.40. In terms of adult victim/survivors who disclosed domestic abuse, the following types of abuse were disclosed:

DA experiences	2022/23	2023/24
Financial abuse	14	5
Sexual abuse	9	4
Physical abuse	23	22
Verbal abuse	0	0
Emotional / psychological abuse	42	43
Controlling and coercive behaviours	0	0

21.41. **Recommendation:** Specialist domestic abuse training for those working with adults with care and support needs should be implemented, with attendance mandatory and monitored; refresher training should be planned. Domestic abuse training should be part of induction training for all new staff.

The Occupational Therapy Team:

21.42. The Occupational Therapy Team are responsible for assessing the needs of children and adults with disabilities, and making recommendations relating to aids, adaptations, and home moves. The team encompasses an Assistant Technology lead, and the Handyperson service, which carries out minor works recommended by the Occupational Therapists, as well as carrying out Sanctuary Scheme works upon direction from the sanctuary scheme co-ordinators. Major works recommended by the Occupational Therapy team will go to the Property Services Group in Shropshire Council. Where a move is deemed necessary to accommodate a person's disability needs, this is passed to the Private Sector Housing Team.

Social Prescribing

- 21.43. Social prescribing started in Shropshire in 2017, working in partnership across health, care, and voluntary and community sectors, and is available through every GP practice in Shropshire. It forms part of the NHS Long Term Plan.
- 21.44. Social Prescribing is a non-medical approach designed to help people with a wide range of social, emotional, physical, or practical needs.
- 21.45. It uses a person centred, preventative approach by intervening early, or by working alongside health and care practitioners in more complex cases. Clients have the space to talk one to one with a trained Link Worker (known locally as Healthy Lives Advisors) and come up with a plan of action together, to help resolve health and wellbeing concerns and help put the person back in charge of their life. Advisors are fully trained in motivational interviewing; behaviour change and health coaching.
- 21.46. Children and Young peoples' Social Prescribing pilot started in south-west Shropshire and has grown successfully and is now available to all young people across the County.

RESET

- 21.47. RESET is a multi-disciplinary team that provides holistic wrap-around support and drug and alcohol treatment for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping across the County. Partners of the project are Shropshire Council, Shropshire Recovery Partnership, the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS), The Shrewsbury Ark and Intuitive Thinking Skills.
- 21.48. RESET is funded by the Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant provided by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). RESET work alongside colleagues in Shropshire Council's housing services so that those currently rough sleeping are ready to take on accommodation.
- 21.49. RESET provides services such as:
- Drug and alcohol recovery support and treatment including medical prescribing via With You at Shropshire Recovery Partnership.
 - Learning new skills or new coping strategies via Intuitive Thinking Skills training, to improve people's resilience and support them to address their substance use with confidence.
 - Domestic abuse support via the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
 - Mental health treatment and support provided by the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust.
 - Social prescribing provided by Shropshire Council's Healthy Lives Programme.
 - Ongoing support and day centre facilities provided by The Shrewsbury Ark.

Integrated Care Board (ICB)

21.50. The ICB is responsible for ensuring that the right medical, NHS and other type of health treatments are available for the population. They have a duty to monitor the available services and commission others for people in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin to ensure a high level of care and good value for money.

21.51. The ICB is one of the statutory partners for Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) and has designated professionals for both adult and children's safeguarding. These professionals are the operational leads for domestic abuse and attend the relevant domestic abuse strategic groups.

Health

Robert Jones Agnes Hunt NHS Foundation Trust

21.52. The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt (RJA) NHS Foundation Trust is a leading specialist orthopaedic hospital situated in Oswestry, Shropshire.

21.53. The Trust provides both specialist and routine orthopaedic care to its local catchment area and nationally. It is a specialist centre for the treatment of spinal injuries and disorders and provides specialist treatment for children with musculoskeletal disorders. The hospital has nine inpatient wards including a private patient ward, 12 operating theatres including a day case surgery unit and full outpatient and diagnostic facilities.

21.54. The Trust works with partner organisations to provide specialist treatment for bone tumours and community-based rheumatology & orthotic services.

21.55. As part of their pre-operation checks of patients, questions are asked such as 'do you feel safe at home' which has shown to increase the number of domestic abuse disclosures. The RJA team then complete a DASH risk assessment and make onward referrals. The team are aiming to attend the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to represent the trust.

21.56. **Recommendation:** RJA to work with statutory partners to ensure that messages delivered via training are consistent across the Partnership.

Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT)

21.57. Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) provides physical and mental health, learning disability and adult social care services. They provide a range of community services across the County, for adults and children, specialised services such as rheumatology and rehabilitation, health and justice services and outreach services.

21.58. MPFT covers Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Staffordshire, and Stoke-on-Trent. In Shropshire it is commissioned by the Integrated Care System (ICS) to deliver all age

mental health and learning disability services, and by Shropshire Council Public Health to deliver sexual health services.

21.59. A trust-wide safeguarding policy covers the domestic abuse response, and this is supported by mandatory training for all staff. MPFT have a domestic abuse lead who is working to look at how to advance their practice in domestic abuse.

21.60. **Recommendation:** MPFT to work with statutory partners to ensure that messages delivered via training are consistent across the Partnership.

Shropshire Community Health Trust

21.61. Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust provides a range of community-based health services for adults and children in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and some surrounding areas.

21.62. The Trust runs services across the whole of the county. There are four community hospitals - in Bishop's Castle, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Whitchurch - as well as the Oswestry Health Centre.

21.63. The Shropshire Community Health Trust services range from district nursing and health visiting to physiotherapy and specialist community clinics. The Trust recognises that vulnerable adults have a right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect and work closely with other organisations to achieve this.

21.64. **Recommendation:** For domestic abuse to become a part of mandatory training for all staff in the Community Health Trust, relevant to their role.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital (SaTH)

21.65. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of district general hospital services for nearly half a million people in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, and mid Wales.

21.66. The main service locations are the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital in Shrewsbury, which together provide 99% of SaTH activity.

21.67. Both hospitals provide a wide range of acute hospital services including Accident & Emergency, Outpatients, Diagnostics, Inpatient Medical Care and Critical Care.

21.68. Alongside services at the Princess Royal and Royal Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital also provide community and outreach services such as:

- Consultant-led outreach clinics
- Midwife-led units
- Renal dialysis outreach services
- Community services including Midwifery, Audiology and Therapies

21.69. SaTH have a domestic abuse policy which is trust wide, with a separate one for maternity. They also have a staff domestic abuse policy.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital - Accident and Emergency

Data 2022-24

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital A+E	2022/23	2023/24
Number of disclosures recorded	109	88
DASH outcomes – Patient high risk	38	29
Outcomes- Referred to MARAC	71	39
Outcomes: Child safeguarding concern raised	32	20

21.70. When disclosures are received in A&E, a DASH is completed and those that are not visibly high risk or do not meet MARAC criteria are referred to the Hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

21.71. Those that are not visibly high risk or do not meet MARAC criteria are referred to the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advisor.

21.72. **Recommendation:** For SATH to look at and understand their assault related injury (ARID) data and explore how the links to domestic abuse

21.73. **Recommendation:** For a Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital representative to attend the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital – Maternity

21.74. Shropshire has five midwifery led units (MLUs), where patients meet Midwives and Women's Services Assistants (WSAs) who care for them throughout their pregnancy.

21.75. The Maternity Led Unit in Shrewsbury provides outpatient services and includes an Early Pregnancy Assessment Service (EPAS), Antenatal services and scanning. There are also maternity led units situated in the Wrekin, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry which all provide outpatient antenatal services and scanning.

21.76. Midwives conduct routine enquiries around domestic abuse with pregnant women every trimester, and this will be recorded. Enquiries take place at a slightly lower rate in the second trimester. If a midwife does not carry out the routine enquiry, they must record why, for example, because they were unable to see the woman alone.

21.77. Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Maternity, provides training to midwives to increase confidence asking their patients about domestic abuse. Midwives are trained to complete a DASH and to send referrals to the Hospital IDVA and MARAC as required; they can also contact the midwifery safeguarding team with any queries.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital- maternity service	2022/23	2023/24
Number of disclosures recorded	26	19

General Practice

21.78. GP practices across Shropshire offer universal health services to the local population.

They are often the first point of contact for people needing assessment and treatment for their physical and mental health concerns. Practices offer many services, including chronic disease management, health promotion, preventative care, acute illness assessment, immunisations, and health screening. GPs provide generalist patient-centred care throughout the life course, with an emphasis on continuity of care.

21.79. GP practices work closely with other health and social care professionals and voluntary agencies to support their patients. GPs and other members of their teams commonly look after those with complex needs. They receive regular training to identify and support those who have been subjected to domestic abuse, including trauma informed care.

The GP Practices collectively have a named Safeguarding Lead who supports the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

21.80. Practices are asked to share information for MARAC and work with other partners as part of the multi-agency response to safeguarding concerns, including domestic abuse.

NHS Shropshire Telford + Wrekin Integrated Care System

21.81. The NHS Shropshire, Telford + Wrekin Integrated Care System is a partner of the NHS and local government organisations, working alongside independent and voluntary sector groups to transform health and care services to deliver world class care which meet current and future needs of Shropshire rural and urban populations.

21.82. The NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System includes the following health care providers:

- NHS West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
- Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
- The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- The Shrewsbury Telford Hospital NHS Trust

West Midlands Crown Prosecution Service and Telford Magistrates Court

21.83. The West Midlands Region of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) covers the police force areas of West Mercia, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, and West Midlands. The British Transport Police is also covered by this region.

- 21.84. The CPS Magistrate's Court Unit prosecute offences of domestic violence, assaults, criminal damage, minor public disorder incidents, minor traffic offences (excluding those dealt with by the police as police-led prosecutions), possession of drugs, dangerous dog offences, offences of dishonesty and commercial burglaries. The CPS Crown Court Unit deal with cases such as murder, robberies, serious assaults, dwelling house burglaries, complex fraud, the supply and trafficking of drugs and the most serious road traffic offences especially those that result in a fatality.
- 21.85. The CPS Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Unit is a dedicated and specialised team who prosecute cases such as rape, serious sexual offences, child abuse, child sexual exploitation, honour-based violence, and Female Genital Mutilation.
- 21.86. The CPS Serious Violence, Organised Crime and Exploitation Unit (SVOCE) – the first of its kind – was launched in the CPS West Midlands region in July 2021. The Unit brings together a team of prosecutors and paralegal staff who have extensive experience of prosecuting cases involving serious gang-related violence, serious drug dealing offences (including county lines) and modern slavery and exploitation. The Unit is part of the Complex Casework Unit.

The Probation Service – Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford Probation Delivery Unit (PDU)

- 21.87. The Probation Service is a statutory Criminal Justice Service that supervises offenders released into the community. The Probation Service is responsible for sentence management in both England and Wales, along with accredited programmes, unpaid work, and structured interventions.
- 21.88. Sentence management focus is on strengthening the probation practitioner's relationship with people on probation, using the right key skills, activities, and behaviours to achieve the most effective outcomes and enable offenders to make positive changes to their lives.
- 21.89. **Recommendation:** To explore how the probation service links with the wider domestic abuse specialist services for victims and perpetrators

West Mercia Youth Justice Service

- 21.90. West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) provides support to young people, parents and victims who are involved in, or are a victim of, crime in West Mercia. Their aim is to reduce offending by children and young people.
- 21.91. WMYJS have Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) based in the four local authority areas: Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire.
- 21.92. In Shropshire, the service may get involved if a young person:

- Gets arrested by the police and admits to committing an offence.
- Is charged with a crime and has to go to court.
- Is convicted of a crime and is given a sentence.

21.93. The Youth Offending teams work with a variety of services and agencies such as the Police and Courts, the National Probation Service, Health, Housing and Children's Services. All young people are assessed on their individual skills, abilities, needs and risks to help devise and deliver a tailored intervention programme to stop them offending.

22. Community Based Services

A4U

- 22.1. A4U is a disability advice organisation and is the lead for the Shropshire Autism Hub, providing support for adults on the Autism Spectrum both pre and post diagnosis. It is a user-led service that has operated in Shropshire for 30 years, based in Shrewsbury. The team supports people across the whole spectrum of physical and learning disability
- 22.2. A4U endeavour to support face-to-face, by telephone and email and will refer and signpost to partners and other appropriate organisations.
- 22.3. A4U informed the needs assessment that they have had several instances where Shropshire Autism Hub clients have disclosed domestic abuse and A4U have supported people to access support and get legal advice.

AgeUK

- 22.4. Age UK in Shropshire is based in Shrewsbury and provides advice and support to older people. When a disclosure of domestic abuse is made the Safeguarding Team will discuss cases and, with the survivor's permission, refer to a specialist Hourglass⁶¹ team made up of case workers, community response network and IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates). Hourglass will then help build tailored safety plans and support older people.⁶²
- 22.5. Age UK employees have access to Domestic Abuse Awareness Training, specialist information, and use of their work equipment to find support safely. Age UK has also joined the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA),⁶³ a network of employers committed to supporting their employees who are or have been subjected to domestic abuse.

⁶¹ <https://wearehourglass.org/who-we-are>

⁶² <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2022/december/new-data-on-domestic-abuse-in-older-people/>

⁶³ <https://www.eida.org.uk/>

Ask for ANI

- 22.6. Ask for ANI⁶⁴ (Action Needed Immediately) is a national codeword scheme developed by the Home Office aimed at enabling victims/survivors to be able to seek help safely in pharmacies. The scheme was developed by the Home Office with the help of partners from the domestic abuse sector, pharmacy associations and the police. It was launched across the UK on 14 January 2021.
- 22.7. Over 5,000 pharmacies, including Boots, Lloyds, and community pharmacies, are now enrolled in the scheme. People from across the UK have been supported by pharmacists to access support from the police or domestic abuse services.

LGBT SAND

- 22.8. SAND is community organisation whose goal is to improve the experiences and increase the expectations of LGBT+ people as they age in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.
- 22.9. Part of SAND's work is around inclusion within health and social care providers and other organisations, groups, and services, that people may need or want to access. For this reason, SAND launched a campaign to EMBRACE a Culture of Inclusion. They encourage all these organisations to make 'pledges' which are practical actions to ensure their service is welcoming and inclusive to the LGBT+ aging community. These pledges take the form of a Covenant.
- 22.10. Those groups and organisations in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin sign up to the following five commitments and agree an annual action plan for change.
- Commit to providing the best possible quality services for older and old LGBT+ people.
 - Commit to learning what life can be and has been like for different LGBT+ people.
 - Commit to vocally and visually supporting groups working with and for older and old LGBT+ people.
 - Commit to creating meaningful opportunities for LGBT+ people and groups to 'influence' what you do.
 - Commit to assess and evidence change, including work carried out to engage LGBT+ people (within the group/organisation and outside it).

The Ark

- 22.11. The Shrewsbury Ark is an independent charity dedicated to helping homeless and vulnerable people in Shropshire.
- 22.12. They provide practical support such as basic facilities, hot meals, clothing, toiletries and sleeping bags, but also emotional support. The Ark runs a day centre and in some cases are the first point of face-to-face contact to build rapport and trust with people; they will

⁶⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ask-for-ani-domestic-abuse-codeword-information-for-pharmacies>

then often link clients in with other agencies for support.

22.13. **Recommendation:** For The Ark to receive training around domestic abuse and perpetrator intervention.

We Are With You

22.14. We Are With You is a drug, alcohol and mental health charity, who offer a broad range of support services for adults and young people across England and Scotland.

22.15. In Shropshire, they provide free and confidential services, without judgement, to adults and young people facing challenges with drugs and alcohol through:

- One to one support
- Support groups
- Support for family and friends
- Clinical support and medication
- Needle and syringe services

22.16. The support for young people offered by We Are With You, aims to provide holistic support focusing on reducing risk-taking behaviour, building resilience, self-esteem, and wellbeing to make positive change.

Shropshire Disability Network

22.17. The Shropshire Disability Network was formed in 2008 aiming to provide a collective voice for disabled people in Shropshire. It holds quarterly open meetings to discuss current disability issues, alongside a newsletter of evidence and information.

Shropshire European Community Group

22.18. Shropshire European Community group work with the Eastern European Community in the County. They work with communities and professionals to bridge the barriers of accessing support. As a part of this work, they are working to increase understanding of domestic abuse, understanding around the different types of domestic violence and abuse and to encourage people to report.

22.19. The Shropshire European Community group lead shared that there is a lack of understanding from professionals on how to engage with these communities and there needs to be improvement in professionals' communication and explaining of processes. They also shared that there is a lot of disappointment from the community regarding their treatment from professionals.

22.20. The organisation is developing regular sessions, once a week, to be set up like an Eastern European Cafe.

Shropshire Mental Health Service (MHS)

- 22.21. The Shropshire MHS provides a diverse range of services across Shropshire and help to bridge the gap between illness and full independence from services.
- 22.22. Shropshire MHS has a new mental health Outreach Support Service available to people in the community who live with long term mental ill health. The aim is to support people to enhance their self-management skills and achieve their recovery goals. The Shropshire MHS also have an A&E outreach team and a dual diagnosis outreach team. The general outreach support for people is between eight to 10 weeks.
- 22.23. Shropshire MHS run a 'Calmer Café', which is a mental health café drop-in service designed for people who are struggling and need a safe place to talk, receive support and be amongst others.
- 22.24. They also have volunteer-led support groups as well as several mental health helpline options from the Samaritans hotline and mental health telephone support.
- 22.25. Shropshire MHS also have a Short-Term Outreach Prevention (STOP) team. The STOP team was developed from the Winter Support project in 2023 and is six-weeks of targeted support for people that are struggling with a particular issue at that time.
- 22.26. They also support people who are being discharged from the Redwood Centre who have been in there for some time.

Citizen's Advice

- 22.27. Citizen's Advice is a network of independent charities offering free, confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person. They provide advice around a number of areas, for example consumer rights, supporting witnesses in courts through the Witness Service and pension guidance to people aged over fifty.
- 22.28. Citizen's Advice Community Advisors sometimes meet people that have been subjected to domestic abuse and they shared that they are seeing an increased amount of coercive and controlling behaviour being disclosed. Citizen's advice value the importance of knowing where they can signpost people.
- 22.29. **Recommendation:** For Shropshire Council to update the domestic abuse pathway for professionals and to consider if a directory of services is required.

Resolve@

- 22.30. Resolve@ is an emotional health and wellbeing service for young people aged 8 – 18 which was set up in 2022 and will be running until the end of March 2025.

- 22.31. Resolve@ has been commissioned to work with young people in Shropshire who have experience of living with domestic violence or abuse.
- 22.32. They provide therapeutic support for young people, as well as psychoeducation and wellbeing support for parents through one-to-one support, group work and awareness sessions. To meet threshold, the young person cannot be living with the perpetrator.
- 22.33. Most referrals to Resolve@ come from schools. Resolve@ shared that they have good relationships with safeguarding leads and early help, however they do not get many referrals from the Local Authority.
- 22.34. **Recommendation:** For Resolve@ information to be shared with professionals in Shropshire Council to increase referrals.
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23. Non-Accommodation Based Support Unmet Need

- 23.1. This section presents the needs assessment findings on unmet need in relation to support in the community for adult and child victims and those who cause harm.
- 23.2. In November (2022) the Domestic Abuse Commissioner released findings from mapping of domestic abuse services across England and Wales: 'A Patchwork of Provision'⁶⁵. Findings included that 'most victims and survivors wanted some form of Community Based Support, for example 83% wanted counselling and therapeutic support and 74% wanted 1:1 support (e.g. a case worker)'.
- 23.3. Overall, it was found that outside of specialist teams and services, there is a need for more training and education around domestic abuse and how to respond to victim/survivors and perpetrators.
- 23.4. The Needs Assessment findings also showed that:
- Further awareness around the available support for domestic abuse is required.
 - There is a need for more collaboration between services/organisations including between specialist domestic & sexual abuse and violence services.
 - There is demand for more joined up work between adult and children's services.
- 23.5. The findings suggest that a piece of work needs to be done to ensure all professionals are aware of how to make a referral into support services.

⁶⁵ [Domestic abuse commissioner \(2022\) a patchwork of provision: How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales.](#)

- 23.6. There is more work that needs to be done in relation to engaging with underrepresented groups such as LGBTQ+ and older people.
- 23.7. **Recommendation:** To review the Domestic Abuse pathway with a view to include specific routes for professionals working with individuals with complex needs.
- 23.8. **Recommendation:** Training around how to improve the response to those subjected to and perpetrating domestic abuse; to include working with those who have multiple disadvantages.

Coordinated Community Response

- 23.9. The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) brings services together to ensure local systems keep survivors safe, hold abusers to account and prevent domestic abuse.
- 23.10. This multi-partnership model was created from the principle that no one agency can effectively deal with domestic abuse on its own; it requires a coordinated effort by all agencies in a local community.
- 23.11. The CCR is a mechanism designed to prevent domestic abuse falling off the radar.
- 23.12. Running through the whole of the CCR should be an awareness and understanding of domestic abuse as trauma, as well as the part trauma plays in abusers' journeys.
- 23.13. **Recommendation:** A trauma informed approach is being developed in Shropshire, and this must fully involve appropriate responses to domestic abuse victims/survivors (children and adults) and those who cause harm (children and adults).

Intersectionality

- 23.14. The needs assessment enables us to have a more detailed understanding of domestic abuse in Shropshire, with data available across some but not all protected characteristics.
- 23.15. In order to improve the domestic abuse response in Shropshire, an increased understanding from professionals around how these characteristics, and other aspects of life, intersect for victims/survivors and those who harm is needed. This should be achieved through survivor and perpetrator engagement and experience, and enhanced data collection, collation, and analysis at a strategic level.

Shared Vision and Objectives

- 23.16. In 2024, The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) released the Strategic Plan and Priorities for 2023-2026⁶⁶. The SSCP is committed to increasing the safety and resilience of people in Shropshire (including children and adults with care and

⁶⁶ [Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership \(2024\) Strategic Plan and Priorities 2023-2026](#)

support needs) and their communities, in order to reduce harm caused by abuse, neglect, and other crime.

23.17. As part of the vision and mission, The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board oversees the statutory duty of the Local Authority and the wider needs of the community in relation to domestic abuse.

23.18. The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards success statements are currently set as follows:

- Referrals to specialist domestic abuse services are reduced due to the wider workforce responding earlier and more appropriately.
- Children are educated on safe and healthy relationships across Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Further Education, to include those home educated, in pupil referral units or accessing alternative education settings, to reduce the likelihood of them using abusive behaviour or becoming victims of abuse.
- All residential and domiciliary care services for adults and children, are contractually obliged to hold domestic abuse policies and implement them via procedures which include mandatory training as outlined in their policy.
- Perpetrators are actively engaged in evidence-based work that educates them to stop using abusive and harmful behaviours.
- People planning and undertaking S47 and S42 enquiries and anti-social behaviour investigations always consider domestic abuse, whether current or historic, in their decision making.
- Our Domestic abuse offer for both victims and perpetrators is accessible to all those that want and need it.

Strategic Leadership

23.19. The Needs Assessment found that there is a need for increased accountability in the partnership approach and response to domestic abuse.

23.20. In terms of representation, many services have now been invited to join an operational domestic abuse forum, so they are able to have representatives from each service to come together and directly feed into the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Resources

23.21. This needs assessment has recognised that in terms of resources, the situation is similar. Therefore, the commissioning of services should build in an approach in which it is not expected that 'one size fits all', and work with other specialists to facilitate accessibility. The Domestic Abuse Partnership should work towards partnership commissioning in which the relevant organisations contribute resources / funds (Local Authority Public Health, Children's Social Care, Adult's Social Care, Housing; Integrated Care Board; Police and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner). Services should be sustainably funded, drawing on resources from across the Partnership, with no short-term contracts

and resourced to meet demand, recognising the high level of experience and expertise of specialist services.

Coordination

23.22. Since the last Needs Assessment, the Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead has worked to gain the commitment of partners for resources and decisions, through supporting the Strategic Group, sharing expertise, national knowledge and good practice and information around new legislation and funding opportunities. There is an identified need for a designated data analyst to support the Partnership to help aid understanding around domestic abuse within Shropshire.

Training

23.23. Training across the Partnership since the last Needs Assessment has not been mapped, so the range of provision and providers is not yet understood. There is a need to establish a Partnership Training Strategy to develop the workforce response at different levels of intervention, increasing the knowledge, capability, and confidence of professionals to support adult and child victims/survivors and hold perpetrators to account, in appropriate, safe, and supportive ways.

23.24. Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Prevention Team has a Training Lead who is creating a suite of modules that can be delivered from a multi-agency perspective.

Data

23.25. The data needs across the Partnership and recommendations are included in the methodology section of this needs assessment.

Policies and Procedures

23.26. Many organisations have specific domestic abuse policies and procedures in place to guide staff in responding to the members of the public they encounter. Some also have policies (or are developing them) to respond to the needs of staff subjected to or perpetrating domestic abuse. This needs assessment found that not all staff are aware of their service's policies and procedures. The Strategic Partnership has a role in ensuring policies and procedures across partner services are aligned, supported by training and supervision, and are regularly reviewed.

Whole Housing Approach

23.27. The Whole Housing Approach⁶⁷ is a framework for addressing the housing and safety needs of victim/survivors in a local area. It brings together all the main housing tenure types, alongside the housing options and support initiatives needed to help people subjected to domestic abuse, to either maintain or access safe and stable housing.

⁶⁷ Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (2024) [Whole Housing Approach](#)

Refuge

23.28. Provision in Shropshire is described elsewhere in the needs assessment. The principles and components must be included in service specifications highlighted by Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance refuge service model⁶⁸

23.29. Commissioners and others responsible for the provision of refuge services must have regard to the importance of specialist service delivery.

23.30. It must be ensured that there is access to:

- Information and advocacy,
- Emotional support,
- Specialist support workers (e.g. drugs/alcohol misuse, mental health, sexual abuse),
- Recovery work,
- Support for children and young people (where needed),
- Practical help, including help with moving into stable, safe housing,
- Key work and support planning (work around support needs including parenting, finances, and wellbeing),
- Safety planning,
- Counselling,
- Peer support and group work.

23.31. Refuge services need three main components of funding in order to deliver this package of therapeutic and practical support: support staff; activity costs (such as costs to meet accessibility needs or travel); and core costs (such as finance, management, and premises).

Registered Providers

23.32. Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) provide all social housing in Shropshire. The Needs Assessment reached out to all 33 providers currently known to Shropshire Council (see 7.36). Responses were received can be shown below:

Registered social landlord	No. Shropshire properties	Domestic Abuse Housing Accredited?	DA policy?	DA training?	DA information for residents
Homes Plus	6023	No	Yes: due to be reviewed do not have procedure but will be creating	Yes, staff attend external training if available	Yes, on website
Connexus	4980	In progress	Yes	Yes	Yes

⁶⁸ https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/media/10650/4_-wha-refuge-services.pdf

Wrekin Housing Group	988	In progress	Yes	Yes (external)	Yes
Shropshire Rural Housing	297	No	Yes	Yes (planned)	Yes (in progress)
Star Housing	4089	No	Yes	Ad hoc	Yes, on website

23.33. Feedback received was around the need for greater partnership approaches in dealing with domestic abuse and more involvement in the Strategic Partnership arrangements. One RSL shared that landlords are being consulted more than previous years.

23.34. Feedback was also shared around the need for more emergency accommodation for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

23.35. **Recommendation:** To explore and rectify the lack of domestic abuse strategic meetings with RSL partners.

23.36. **Recommendation:** Encourage all providers to work towards DAHA Accreditation if not already doing so. Ensure separate domestic abuse policies and procedures are in place, not contained within ASB, and are supported by training and information for residents. Ensure RSLs are appropriately involved in the Partnership structure.

Private Rental Sector

23.37. This is defined as a room or dwelling that is rented or let by a private individual or business, as part of a commercial operation. Separate teams in Shropshire Council are responsible for different aspects of relationships with private sector landlords.

Privately Owned Sector

23.38. This refers to anyone who owns their own home, whether they have a mortgage or own the property outright.

Supported and Sheltered Housing⁶⁹

23.39. Defined as accommodation usually purpose-built with staff onsite, provided for people who have varying support needs.

Domestic Abuse Mobile or Co-located Advocacy⁷⁰

23.40. This is community-based domestic abuse advocacy that focuses on victim/survivors' self-identified needs. Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) Outreach service offers this by supporting victims/survivors in the community. Mobile advocacy that can meet victims/survivors more flexibly is more able to meet the needs of those facing multiple

⁶⁹ https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/media/10654/8_-wba-supported-housing-homelessness-services.pdf

⁷⁰ https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/media/10656/10_-wba-co-located-housing-advocacy.pdf

disadvantages.

23.41. In July 2024, Shropshire Council started a trial to co-locate an SDAS outreach support officer into the Housing Support Team, to provide specialist support to those in temporary accommodation. Victims/survivors in contact with Housing Options are not consistently referred to SDAS and despite there being a Domestic Abuse Lead Housing Options Officer there is more work to be done. The data shows that there are still high numbers of victims/survivors and their children placed in hotels and B&Bs, despite the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 outlining that this is not appropriate.

23.42. **Recommendation:** To explore further co-located DA specialists within the housing teams.

Flexible Funding⁷¹

23.43. There are limited funding options available for victims/survivors in Shropshire, through the Housing Options Team and SDAS, but none fit the definition of flexible funding.

Managed Reciprocals

23.44. There are no formal arrangements in place between Registered Social Landlords in Shropshire, and this needs to be developed.

Perpetrator Management

23.45. Recently, Shropshire has seen the introduction of two domestic abuse perpetrator programmes delivered by Cranstoun, as mentioned previously. There is work required around understanding the housing related needs of perpetrators and the action that can be taken against them.

23.46. **Recommendation:** The Domestic Abuse Prevention Team to work in partnership with Cranstoun and engage with perpetrator programme attendees to understand the needs of perpetrators and include this in all training provided.

24. Report Recommendations:

24.1. This section brings together the recommendations for Shropshire on improving services overall that have been included through the report.

24.2. Areas of unmet need are addressed separately, as follows, with the priorities highlighted in the Commissioning Priorities, section 4.

- Safe accommodation unmet need: section 16.

⁷¹ https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/media/10657/11_-_wha-flexible-funding.pdf

- Non-accommodation based unmet need: section 22.

Needs Assessment Recommendations

- 24.3. The Partnership must include, in future action plans, the statutory requirement to refresh the Needs Assessment annually and conduct a new one every three years.
- 24.4. The Domestic Abuse Partnership must develop a communications strategy and action plan to raise awareness across all communities around the types of domestic abuse, including financial/economic abuse. It must challenge the prevailing stereotypes and myths outlined in this report and provide information on the support available.

Survivor Involvement Recommendations

- 24.5. Involve those with lived experience in the design, evaluation, and review of specialist service provision and processes.
- 24.6. To enhance the involvement of those with lived experience in the development of responses, processes, and training for non-domestic abuse specialist professionals.
- 24.7. To ensure diversity of survivor involvement, Shropshire Council's Lived Experience Project Officer needs to be supported by professionals to work with voluntary and community services, including 'by and for' services, working with or representing (not an exhaustive list) minoritized ethnic groups, older people, LGBTQ+ people, e.g., A4U, SAND, the Gypsy, Roma Traveller Team, and others.

Coordinated Community Response Recommendations

- 24.8. **Data:** Use the data collection templates, developed through this needs assessment, to guide the improvement of enhanced data collection across the Partnership. Add to the data collection with requests for outcomes data gathered by all services and identify key indicators to measure the impact of the Partnership. Also ensure services collect data across the full range of demographic information, and this is collated and analysed by the Partnership to identify gaps
- 24.9. **Communication:** The Domestic Abuse Partnership must develop a communications strategy and action plan, to raise awareness across Shropshire around the current domestic abuse response; to include each organisation/service and what support they provide in relation to domestic abuse. There should also be a review of the domestic abuse pathway to ensure all professionals are provided with the available options of support to share with their clients.
- 24.10. **Shared Vision and Objectives:** For all domestic abuse lead professionals across the Partnership to work collaboratively to embed a coordinated, consistent, and structured

approach to holding perpetrators to account and supporting victims.

24.11. **Structure and Governance:** To ensure that the newly established Operational Domestic Abuse Forum details are circulated to ensure any practitioner can be involved in the Partnership.

24.12. **Resources:** Commissioning of services should build in an approach in which it is not expected that 'one size fits all', and work with other specialists to facilitate accessibility. Services should be sustainably funded, drawing on resources from across the Partnership, with no short-term contracts and resourced to meet demand, recognising the high level of experience and expertise of specialist services.

24.13. **Coordination:** A Data Analyst role is needed to support the Partnership

24.14. **Training:** Training must continue to be developed around domestic abuse; all training delivered across the Partnership should be mapped. A Partnership Training Strategy to develop the workforce response at different levels of intervention, increasing the knowledge, capability, and confidence of professionals to support adult and child victims/survivors, and hold perpetrators to account, in appropriate, safe, and supportive ways

General recommendations for all services/organisations

24.15. Below are a series of general recommendations for all services/organisations

- For all services to be involved in guiding the development of enhanced data collection around domestic abuse in Shropshire.
- For all services, as well as police, to look at how they record domestic abuse, to ensure that demographics such as gender of victim/survivors and gender of suspects can be reported on.
- For domestic abuse services to assess the reasons for repeat referrals into their service.
- All services to collect victim/survivors' gender in order to help better understand domestic abuse in Shropshire and assess unmet need.
- To continue to map the pathway for access to mental health support, to better understand the need for mental health support in Shropshire for domestic abuse survivors
- For all services to consider revising how they record disability to include a breakdown of the nature of disability.
- To raise awareness to businesses within Shropshire, around the importance of having a domestic abuse policy in place to help to ensure that victim/survivors of domestic

abuse, who are employed are supported by their employer.

- To continue to raise awareness to professionals on what is available locally for domestic abuse perpetrators and to include the information in the domestic abuse pathway for professionals.
- For each service/organisation to circulate the child to parent abuse policy to all professionals.
- A trauma informed approach is being developed in Shropshire, and this must fully involve appropriate responses to domestic abuse victims/survivors (children and adults) and those who cause harm (children and adults).
- To understand the scope of honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation in Shropshire.
- For all services to record where appropriate the type of domestic abuse their clients are being subjected to.
- To explore potential barriers which may be preventing LGBT+ survivors from accessing domestic abuse support within Shropshire.
- To review the Domestic Abuse Pathway with a view to include specific routes for professionals working with individuals with complex needs.
- To embed in their procedure the idea of a '360 approach'. Consider creating mechanisms in place between agencies, to ensure that the referrer is aware when and if there has been an action completed from their referral.
- Training around how to improve the response to those subjected to and perpetrating domestic abuse; to include working with those who have multiple disadvantages.

Service/organisations recommendations

24.16. Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service

- To explore the reason why a high proportion of clients decline support after being referred into refuge service.
- Acorns Service has been launched, so there is a need to fully explore why there are still individuals being unsuccessful/denied refuge provision due to service being unable to meet support needs around drug and alcohol.
- To explore the less common reasons for referrals to refuge being denied.
- wider understanding of their IDVA service and what that provides for them to look at their delivery model to manage the increase in referral rates
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service to consider the recommendation in the 2022 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment around developing a plan for a new refuge whilst working with commissioners to identify the type of safe accommodation required. Partners may need to explore further the gaps in unmet need that have yet

to be identified before making a final decision on this.

24.17. **Sanctuary Scheme**

- For Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme Coordinators to work with West Mercia Police, to gather data in relation to clients receiving assessments in Shropshire to create a comprehensive picture on the delivery of the Scheme
- Sanctuary Scheme Co-ordinators to record the date of birth of clients referred into the service consistently, to provide the demographic data.
- Domestic Abuse Prevention Team to promote the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme to various professionals to ensure they are aware of how to refer into the scheme, the criteria, and the process, to ensure that the scheme is being utilised.

24.18. **Shropshire Council Housing Service**

- For the Shropshire Council Housing Service to review their domestic abuse pages available to the public to ensure that it is easily accessible and includes all necessary information.
- For a domestic abuse training plan to be put together that all Shropshire Council Housing Teams must complete. Part of the plan will be to undertake regular refresher training once all modules have been completed.
- When focussing on development, ensure that all forms of housing, including sheltered and supported accommodation, are safe and appropriate.
- Training and referral pathways: Providing an appropriate level of training for staff according to their role
- Raising awareness of the Domestic Abuse Directory of services accessed via Shropshire Council Well Being pages on the internal intranet.
- Updating the external internet Housing pages so victim/survivors know how and where to access support. External internet pages must also include information for perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure they are aware of how they can access support to change their behaviour.
- Shropshire Council should progress with the Whole Housing Approach (WHA) including gaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation.
- For all teams in the housing service, to consider their domestic abuse response by creating a set of policies and procedures.
- To explore further co-located DA specialists within the housing teams.
- When a victim/survivor (and any accompanying children) is placed in temporary accommodation, an appropriately trained Housing Support Officer is assigned to provide support within 48 hours. The support should be focused on reducing isolation, access to food, improving awareness of local amenities, and should be delivered in a trauma informed way.
- Before placing a victim/survivor in temporary accommodation, the local authority must carry out necessary checks to assure itself of the suitability and safety of the building and its surrounding environment.
- When placing perpetrators of domestic abuse in temporary accommodation, there must be careful consideration to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved. In order to do so, best practices around managing perpetrators of domestic abuse in temporary accommodation must be explored and followed.

Ensure that survivors of domestic abuse, are signposted where necessary to furniture and clothing access which include but are not limited to local furniture schemes, little stars for children's clothing, baby stop and the Welfare Support Team.

24.19. West Mercia Women's Aid

- To explore the repeat referrals to WMWA Hospital IDVA service, to better understand the reason for multiple repeats.

24.20. MARAC

- To explore options of multiple meetings a month to lessen the length of time per meeting.
- Complete a review of MARAC and the whole system approach.
- Safe Lives provides toolkits for MARAC representatives, as well as a guide to the MARAC process, MARAC representatives should circulate this, to their service.
- More training and information sharing in relation to what MARAC is, how to refer into MARAC as a professional.

24.21. Operation Encompass

- regular full reviews of the operation Encompass protocol and PITSTOP meetings.

24.22. Shropshire Community Health Trust

- For domestic abuse to become a part of mandatory training for all staff in the Community Health Trust, relevant to their role.

24.23. Robert Jones Agnus Hunt

- RJAHS to work with statutory partners to ensure that messages delivered via training are consistent across the Partnership.

24.24. Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital (SATH)

- For SATH to look at and understand their assault related injury (ARID) data and explore how the links to domestic abuse
- For a Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital representative to attend the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

24.25. Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

- MPFT to work with statutory partners to ensure that messages delivered via training are consistent across the Partnership.

24.26. Resolve@

- For Resolve@ information to be shared with professionals in Shropshire Council to increase referrals.

24.27. West Mercia Police

- For West Mercia police to increase awareness raising around domestic abuse in terms of how to report and how to spot the signs of abuse.

- West Mercia Police to be specific on how domestic abuse is recorded on their system, to improve data recording and data collection.
- To be able to spot patterns and trends in relation to the impact/causation factors of domestic abuse, those completing crime report must consider using the same key words, so there can be a direct comparison of causation/impact factors.
- To consider how the influencing factors of domestic abuse are identified by West Mercia Police through risk assessments.
- For West Mercia Police to increase the use of DVPN/DVPOs in appropriate cases.
- To consider how West Mercia Police record children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right and explore where this data is collected, how it is reported on, the frequency of the reporting and who receives the report.

24.28. **The Ark**

- For The Ark to receive training around domestic abuse and perpetrator intervention.

24.29. **Shropshire Council**

- For Shropshire Council to update the domestic abuse pathway for professionals
- To include the requirement for the Local Authority, Shropshire Council to refresh the domestic abuse needs assessment annually, in future action plans.
- If surveys are used for the next Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs assessment, ensure the survey collects information around participants socio-economic status.
- To consider how we can improve our engagement with victims of domestic abuse who are street homeless/sofa surfing for future needs assessment work, to ensure we are gaining their feedback to help shape and inform the needs assessment.
- To explore if children and adult's services are referring into domestic abuse support services within Shropshire. Where referral rates are low, teams to be directed to the internal Shropshire Council Wellbeing Pages to access the Domestic Abuse directory which includes local and national domestic abuse support services information.

24.30. **Shropshire Council Children's Services**

- Specialist domestic abuse training for those working with children and families should be implemented, with attendance mandatory and monitored; refresher training should be planned. Domestic abuse training should be part of induction training for all new staff.
- Multi-agency review of the whole family's journey through Children's Services, to include targeted Early Help. The review must include responses to those who use harmful behaviours, perpetrators of abuse, victims/survivors of abuse and the children and young people connected to them.
- Review working practices, policies, and procedures around domestic abuse, to ensure they align with both the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023.

24.31. **PITSTOP**

- To revise when PIT STOP information gets released to attendees, this often comes in the day before PITSTOP, however some professionals would benefit from having the

information earlier in the day to have more time to prepare for the meeting.

24.32. Shropshire Council Public Health

- To review if Public Health can collect data, from the delivery of their Public Health programmes, on domestic abuse need.

24.33. Shropshire Council Adult Social Care

- For a representative from adult services to consistently attend MARAC meetings.
- Specialist domestic abuse training for those working with adults with care and support needs should be implemented, with attendance mandatory and monitored; refresher training should be planned. Domestic abuse training should be part of induction training for all new staff.

24.34. Domestic Abuse Prevention Team

- To carry out an options appraisal on the team in its current form, exploring future options, examining up the benefits of the team, as well as the impact on removing it.
- The Domestic Abuse Prevention Team to work in partnership with Cranstoun and engage with perpetrator programme attendees to understand the needs of perpetrators and include this in all training provided.
- Involve those with lived experience in the design, evaluation, and review of specialist service provision and processes
- Involve those with lived experience in the development of responses, processes, and training for non-domestic abuse specialist professionals.
- To ensure the diversity of survivor involvement, work with voluntary and community services including 'by and for' services working with or representing (not an exhaustive list) minoritized ethnic groups, older people, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities e.g., A4U, SAND, the Gypsy, Roma Traveller Team, and others.

24.35. Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

- For the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to extend its reach to be a Violence Against Women and Girls Board.
- Recommendation: As a partnership, explore how to reach all age groups in regard to domestic abuse support services.
- A need to review intervention methods of domestic abuse within Shropshire, to reduce the number of repeat victims and suspects.
- Consider commissioning services to support victims of stalking/harassment

24.36. The below are recommendations left from the previous Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment and it is recommended that the Domestic Abuse Partnership review them and decide if they are still appropriate to be carried over.

24.37. Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service

- The domestic abuse partnership should identify how best to involve CPS and court partners, as it will not be appropriate or possible for them to attend every meeting. Shropshire to work with Telford and Wrekin to map available support to victims/survivors attending court; identify needs; and take action to meet those

needs.

24.38. **Armed Forces**

- The needs assessment attempted to understand the range of services in place to support serving personnel and veterans. The Army Welfare Service and SSAFA (the Armed Forces Charity) are both listed in the MARAC membership. In Shropshire Council there are dedicated roles working with these services: an Armed Forces Covenant Lead and an Armed Forces Outreach Support Coordinator. They work with: Royal British Legion, Combat Stress, Operation Courage (NHS), Walking with the Wounded, Help 4 Heroes, and The Ripple Pond, some of which are national services. There are also likely to be equivalents for the Army Welfare Service in other parts of the Armed Forces based in Shropshire. Recommendation: a thorough mapping to be completed of all services operating in Shropshire in relation to the armed forces and veterans, to effectively involve them in the domestic abuse partnership, and ensure guidance is provided.

24.39. **Youth Justice**

- Map the practitioners in Shropshire who received this training and identify where the programme could be run.

24.40. **Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately):**

- Understand the current situation in Shropshire including who the lead is, what training is provided, and how effective the scheme has been in supporting Shropshire residents.

24.41. **Registered Social Landlords:**

- Domestic abuse partnership to encourage all providers to work towards DAHA Accreditation if not already doing so. Ensure separate domestic abuse policies and procedures are in place, not contained within ASB; supported by training and information for residents. Ensure Registered Social Landlords are appropriately involved in the partnership structure

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25. Appendix

Appendix 1: Contributors to the Needs Assessment 2024

Meetings/Discussions held		
Name	Role	Organisation
Sue Coleman	Chief Executive	West Mercia Women's Aid
Rabinder Dhami	Prevention officer	Shropshire Fire and rescue service
Emma Blakemore	Managing director	Innovate
Claire Nelson	Director of Services	Innovate
Kerry Robertson	Lead Therapist	Innovate
Lynne Kemp	Service Manager	SDAS
Heather	Senior Support Officer- Outreach	SDAS
Kate Annison	Children and Young person's service manager	West Mercia Women's Aid
Sue Gorbing	Director	LGBT sand
Sharon McDougall	Wellbeing Officer	Shropshire Council
Michelle John	Director	PEGS
Claire Hughes	Nurse specialist safeguarding adults	Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
Gillian Corp	IDVA - inclusion	West Mercia Women's Aid
Laura Roche	ISVA manager	Axis Counselling
Sirian Bartlett	Senior Adult ISVA	Axis Counselling
Nicki Williamson	ISVA manager	Axis Counselling
Paula Farley	Manager	Victim advice Line - West Mercia Police
Melissa McGuire	IDVA	West Mercia Women's Aid
Natalie Arrowsmith	Detective inspector, vulnerability, and safeguarding team	West Mercia Police
Carolyn Ball	Commissioning Officer	PCC Office
Helen Harris	RAJH	RAJH
Alison Alexander	Specialist Services Manager	Citizens Advice
Phillip Heywood	Neighbourhood manager	Wrekin Housing
Teresa Tanner	Lead Nurse for safeguarding children and young people Lead nurse for domestic abuse and sexual violence	The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
Lorna Tilley	Head of Service	West Mercia Youth Justice Service

Ruth Edwards	District Crown prosecutor	Crown Prosecution Service
Sally Burns	Lead Midwife Safeguarding/Lead Midwife FGM	The Shrewsbury and Telford hospital Trust
Louise Norton	Ludlow MLU manager	The Shrewsbury and Telford hospital trust
Paul Cooper	Adult safeguarding Lead	NHS Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group
Elena Lloyd	Child safeguarding lead	NHS Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning group
Jane Parsons	Education Access and Safeguarding Officer	Shropshire Council
Elaine Palmer	Service manager	Bromford
Andrea Williams	Service Manager	Cranstoun Men and Masculinities
Heather Osborne	Chief Officer	AgeUK
Kate Fejfer	Shropshire Europe	
Heather Ireland	CEO	Shropshire Mental Health Service
Karen Flynn	Domestic Abuse Education Coordinator	Shropshire Council
Amanda Pyke	Younger persons service	Connexus
Joanne Delahay	Detective Inspector	West Mercia Police
Rose Greenslade	Day centre manager	The Shrewsbury Ark
Ethan Green	Support Worker	The Shrewsbury Ark
Hannah Griffiths	Young People's IDVA	West Mercia Women's Aid
Gabrielle Ernest	Operations Manager- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health	The Childrens Society
Hayley Thomas Brown	Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	Shropshire Council
Julie Meijuerio	Domestic abuse engagement lead-early help	Shropshire Council
Sam Brookfield	RESET	We are With You
Amanda Atherton	MPFT	Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

Provided with information/data/feedback via email		
Name	Role	Organisation
Mike Jenkins	MARAC co- Ordinator	MARAC
Emma Harris	DRIVE	Cranstoun
Phillip Heywood	Neighbourhood manager	Wrekin Housing
Christopher Hodgson	Data and reporting analyst	Shropshire Council
Val Hamilton	Area Manager	Victim Support
Julie Harvey	Community Safety Manager	Homesplus
Sarah Browne	Specialist Nurse for safeguarding children and Lead Nurse for Child Exploitation	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
Laura Davies	Senior Housing Manager	Connexus
Admin PEGS	Admin Manager- Chloe	PEGS
Andrea Williams	Service Manager for Telford and Wrekin Domestic abuse Service	Cranstoun

Laura Roche	Head of operations	Axis Counselling
Tracy Haigh	Senior EMS Support Co-Ordinator	Shropshire Council
Tim Compton	Senior Performance and Insight Analyst Information, Intelligence, and Insight	Shropshire Council
Katie Harris	Safeguarding Practitioner	MPFT
John Green	Chief executive	Shropshire Rural Housing Association
Mitch Allan	Assistant director of housing	Star Housing
Sue Adams	Quality and Administration manager	Connexus
Sue Coleman	Chief executive	West Mercia Women's aid
Alison Alexander	Specialist Services Manager	Citizens Advice Shropshire
Richard Law	Senior Data and Reporting Analyst	Adult social Care Shropshire Council
George Branch	Head of probation	HM prison and probation service
Julia Stiff	Senior Crime Intelligence Analyst	West Mercia Police
Julia Rogers	Partnership analyst	West Mercia Police
Sally Burns	Lead Midwife Safeguarding Maternity	The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust
Chris Beesly	Data officer	Shropshire Recover Partnership
Sarah Home	Director of Care	Willowdene Rehabilitation Ltd
Fiona Whitaker- Stranks	Senior Housing Options Officer	Shropshire Council
Ella Baines	Named GP for safeguarding adults and children	NHS Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin
Val Hamilton	Area manager	Victim Support
Steve Compton	Service manager- early years	Shropshire Council
Elena Lloyd	Designated nurse for safeguarding children	ICB
Amanda Atherton	Deputy head of safeguarding and domestic abuse lead	MPFT
Gordon Kochane	Public Health consultant	Shropshire Council
Charlene Parris	Senior Housing Options Officer	Shropshire Council
Laura Fisher	Head of housing, resettlement and independent living homes and communities	Shropshire Council
Harriet Mcinnes	Domestic Abuse Training Lead	Shropshire Council
Kate Connor	Lived Experience Project Officer	Shropshire Council
Wendy Bulman	Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead	Shropshire Council
Charlotte Howell	Domestic Abuse Project Officer	Shropshire Council

Attempted to involve
Organisation
Brightstar boxing
Shropshire Supports refugees
Shropshire Disability Network
YSS Enhance project
Shropshire Council: Armed forces outreach support and Leisure, Armed forces covenant lead

Appendix 2 Blank template of data request

Data request	2022/23	2023/24
Total referrals received		
Total referrals accepted		
Total referrals that are repeat referrals		
Reasons for referrals not being accepted (with numbers):		
Referral sources (list with numbers):		
Anonymous		
Education – Other		
Education – School		
Health - A&E		
Health - community adult health services		
Health - community children's health services		
Health – GP		
Health - NHS 111		
Health - other hospital		
Health - Other primary		
Health - West Midlands Ambulance Service		
IDVA (West Mercia Women's Aid)		
Local Authority Adult Social Care		
Local Authority Children's Services - Early Help		
Local Authority Children's Services - Social Care		
Local Authority Housing & Homelessness		
Mental Health - Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust		
Mental Health - Other		
National Domestic Abuse Helpline		
Self		
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS)		
West Mercia Police		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Total referrals that came from out of area		
List the top five places they came from, and how many:		
1		
2		

3		
4		
5		
Records broken down by (for adult V/S disclosed DA):	2022/23	2023/24
Age		
16-18		
19-24		
25-34		
35-44		
45-54		
55-64		
65-74		
75-84		
85+		
Gender identity		
Cis woman		
Cis man		
Non-Binary		
Transgender man		
Transgender woman		
Other		
Unknown		
Marital status		
Married / civil partnered		
Cohabiting		
Single		
Separated		
Divorced/legally dissolved		
Widowed		
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual/straight		
Gay/lesbian		
Bisexual		
Other		
Unknown		
Disability		
Disability		
No disability		
Unknown		
National identity / ethnic group		
White		
Asian / Asian British		
Black / Black British		
Mixed		

Gypsy / Roma / Traveller		
Other		
Immigration status		
Family Visa (e.g. partner or parent visa)		
Work/Student/Visit Visa		
Asylum Seeker (public funds not accessible but asylum support available)		
Refugee (public funds accessible)		
No Immigration Leave or Expired Leave		
Other/Unknown/Prefer Not to Say		
Language		
Translator / interpreter needed		
Low literacy		
Housing type		
Private/Owner Occupier		
Private Renter		
Social Housing - single tenancy (secure)		
Social Housing - single tenancy (other)		
Social Housing - joint tenancy (secure)		
Social Housing - joint tenancy (other)		
Temporary Accommodation		
Temporary Accommodation: Supported Housing		
Supporting Housing		
Sheltered Housing		
Homeless - rough sleeping		
Other Supported Housing (list, with numbers)		
Household structure		
Single adult with child(ren)		
Partners with child(ren)		
Single adult with no children		
Partners with no children		
Single adult with children that have been removed		
Partners with children that have been removed		
Occupation		
Employed PT / FT		
Unemployed		
Student		
Looking after family / home		
Retired		
Economically Inactive/Long or Short Term Ill/Other Inactive		
Household income		
Less than £10,400 p/a		

£10,400 to less than £20,800 p/a		
£20,800 to less than £31,200 p/a		
£31,200 to less than £41,600 p/a		
£41,600 to less than £52,000 p/a		
£52,000 or more p/a		
No income stated or not enough information provided		
Education		
Degree / diploma		
A / AS Levels / Apprenticeship		
GCSEs / O Levels		
Other		
None		
Unknown		
Disability/Health		
Physical Disability/Mobility Impairment (inc. Wheelchair Access Required)		
Sensory Impairment		
Deaf/Hearing Impairment (including Sign Language User or Interpretation Required)		
Visual Impairment (including Braille or Other Visual Support Required)		
Speech Impairment or Communication Difficulties		
Learning Difficulty		
Mental Health Issues		
Autism, Asperger's, or Other Neuro-Diverse Condition		
Personal Care Requirements		
Other Long-Term Health Condition		
Children with Health Condition/s		
Disability/health showing as a barrier to services in your area		
Additional support needs		
Care Leaver		
Service Personnel/Armed Forces		
Offending History		
Homeless		
Rough Sleeper		
Alcohol Misuse		
Drug Misuse		
Sex Work		
Legal Support		
Financial Support		
Other		
VAWG experiences		
Honour Based Violence		
Forced Marriage		

Female Genital Mutilation		
Non-DA sexual violence		
Other VAWG		
DA experiences		
Financial abuse		
Sexual abuse		
Physical abuse		
Verbal abuse		
Emotional / psychological abuse		
Controlling and coercive behaviours		

Appendix 3 Survey Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment Survey

Introduction: Shropshire Council are conducting the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment. The purpose of this survey is to gather the voices of those with lived experience in terms of their experience of seeking support for domestic abuse in Shropshire.

We would like to invite you to share your views around the support you received as well as your experiences of the services you accessed, including safe accommodation. This survey should take between 10-15 minutes to complete.

Before you begin the survey, please read the Participant Information Sheet

1. Please confirm:

You ☐ are 16 years old or over

You ☐ have read and understood the **Participant Information Sheet**.

You ☐ have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask question that you have not understood satisfactorily.

You understand that participation is voluntary and that you are free to not to participate without giving reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged.

You understand that the information given is anonymous and will be securely stored. You understand that you will not be able to withdraw consent for your survey responses to be used in this research once you have completed the survey because your response will not be identifiable.

☐ You consent to Shropshire Council storing this information as part of the Shropshire Council Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment.

☐ I confirm and would like to continue

Section 2: The following questions are asked to help us to provide an overview of our participants

Please select your age *

- ☐ 16
- ☐ 17
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+

- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please select your gender *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

Please select your national identity/ethnic group *

- White
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/Black British
- Mixed
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Please select your sexual orientation *

- ☐ Heterosexual/straight
- ☐ Gay/Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please select your marital status *

- ☐ Married/civil partnership
- ☐ With Partner
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced/legally dissolved
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have a disability? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have access to public funds? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Do you have children? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If yes, what are the ages of your children? *

- ☐ Pregnant
- ☐ 0-4 years

- 5-10 years
- 11-14 years
- 15-17 years
- Adults
- Prefer not to say

Section 3

The following questions are designed to gather the voices of those with lived experience in terms of safe accommodation and/or seeking community support for domestic abuse

Did you need to leave your home? *

- Yes
- No

Where were you living at the point of fleeing or seeking domestic abuse support? *

- Co-Homeowner with abusive partner
- Lived with abusive partner who was the homeowner
- Homeowner (alone, not with abusive partner)
- Private Rental Tenant
- Living with family
- Council Tenant
- Housing Association Tenant
- Street Homeless/sofa surfing
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Have you been supported by any of the following? *

- Shropshire Council Housing Service
- Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme
- None of the above

Please identify which service you used *

- HomePoint
- Housing options
- Temporary accommodation
- Housing support
- Floating support
- Other

What could house teams do better when responding to domestic abuse? *

Section 4

These questions are designed to better understand your experience with the domestic abuse support services in Shropshire

Which domestic abuse service did you access for support? *

- West Mercia Women's Aid
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
- Parental Educational Growth Support
- Axis Counselling
- Other

Please identify what type of support you received from West Mercia Women's Aid

- ☐ IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor)
- ☐ Hospital IDVA
- ☐ Children and young people
- ☐ 24-hour Helpline
- ☐ Partner support (partner/ex-partner accessing perpetrator programme)
- ☐ Other

Please identify what type of support you received from Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service *

- ☐ Refuge
- ☐ Outreach support
- ☐ Dispersed accommodation
- ☐ Groups
- ☐ Other

What support did you receive from PEGS? Parental Growth Support *

- ☐ Virtual drop-ins
- ☐ Peer support group
- ☐ Empowering Parents in Crisis (EPIC) sessions
- ☐ One to one Support
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Other

What support did you receive from PEGS? Parental Growth Support *

- ☐ Virtual drop-ins
- ☐ Peer support group
- ☐ Empowering Parents in Crisis (EPIC) sessions
- ☐ One to one Support
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Other

What support did you receive from Axis Counselling? *

- ☐ Pre-Trial Counselling
- ☐ LINK Counselling
- ☐ Trauma Focused Counselling
- ☐ Fast Track Counselling
- ☐ HEAR4YOU listening service
- ☐ Groups and workshops
- ☐ Online self-help programme- TORWA
- ☐ Other

Please select all that apply in regard to refuge *

- ☐ You were placed in temporary accommodation before entering refuge
- ☐ Currently supported in refuge
- ☐ Left refuge - If you left refuge before securing settled housing, could you tell us why?

Please select any other domestic abuse service you accessed for support *

- ☐ Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
- ☐ West Mercia Women's Aid
- ☐ Parental Educational Growth Support
- ☐ Axis Counselling
- ☐ Not applicable

- Other

Are you currently being supported by these services? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Section 5: These questions are to provide an opportunity to feedback around the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

- How easy was it to get help from the agencies you are/have previously been supported by? *
- Do you feel your support plan and ongoing reviews of your support plan, met your needs? *
- How is the support you are receiving/have previously received made a positive difference to your life? *
- Has any of the support you have received, had a negative impact on your life? *
- How can we improve the domestic abuse response in Shropshire? *
- Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Prevention Team (DAPT) is inviting people who've been subjected to domestic abuse to join us and help shape the services that are there to support them.

Appendix 4- a table created from the 2021, Office National Statistics Census data to show Shropshire residents data:

Age band	Shropshire			
	Female	Male	Total	%
0 – 4	7,020	7,403	14,423	4.5%
5-9	7,883	8,366	16,249	5.0%
10-14	8,406	8,841	17,247	5.3%
15 – 19	8,063	8,856	16,919	5.2%
20 – 24	7,007	8,119	15,126	4.7%
25 – 29	8,120	8,752	16,872	5.2%
30 – 34	8,976	8,977	17,953	5.5%
35 – 39	8,677	8,588	17,265	5.3%
40 – 44	8,450	8,234	16,684	5.2%
45 – 49	10,226	9,752	19,978	6.2%
50 – 54	12,516	11,794	24,310	7.5%
55 – 59	12,958	12,580	25,538	7.9%
60 – 64	11,678	11,286	22,964	7.1%
65 – 69	10,631	10,186	20,817	6.4%
70 – 74	11,361	10,587	21,948	6.8%
75 – 79	8,973	8,039	17,012	5.3%
80 – 84	6,327	5,161	11,488	3.5%
85 – 89	3,917	2,886	6,803	2.1%
90 and over	2,738	1,285	4,023	1.2%
Total	163,927	159,692	323,619	100%

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Shropshire Safe Accommodation Strategy July 2025

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Introduction

This document sets out Shropshire Council's strategy for domestic abuse safe accommodation, as required by Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It provides the context and background for the statutory requirements, outlines the process followed by Shropshire Council to deliver this strategy, and sets out safe accommodation commissioning intentions.

When it came into force in April 2021, Part 4 of the Act set out new duties for local authorities. In summary these are to:

- appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (in line with core membership set out in the Domestic Abuse Act and statutory guidance), which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified functions
- assess the need for safe accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area
- in consultation with the Partnership Board, develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality – which is based on the needs assessment, is implemented through commissioning decisions, and includes monitoring and evaluation

Local authorities have been allocated new burden funding to meet their new duties including the requirement to deliver safe accommodation-based support. The allocations announced for Shropshire Council were £591,756 in 2023/24 and £602,920 in 2024/25¹.

It is the Local Authority's duty to ensure safe accommodation-based support is provided as defined in Part 4 of the Act:

- **Refuge accommodation** – a refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation.
- **Specialist safe accommodation** – specialist safe accommodation offering single gender or single sex accommodation, alongside dedicated domestic abuse support which is tailored to also support those who share particular protected characteristic(s) and / or who share one or more vulnerabilities requiring additional support.
- **Dispersed accommodation** – safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge OR 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s.
- **Sanctuary Schemes** – properties with local authority or private registered providers of social housing installed Sanctuary Schemes which provide enhanced physical security measures to a home or the perimeter of the home. The [Whole Housing Approach Toolkit on Sanctuary Schemes](#) provides further information.

¹[Gov UK \(2023\) Local Authority Domestic Abuse Duty: 2023 to 2025 funding allocations](#)

- **Second stage accommodation** – accommodation temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of relevant accommodation and/or who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and settled accommodation.
- **Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation** – a safe place (single gendered or single sex, secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse) with domestic abuse support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation.

The support that can be funded is as follows:

- **Overall management of services within relevant safe accommodation** – including capacity building, support and supervision of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager).
- **Support with the day-to-day running of the service** – for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff).
- **Advocacy support** – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).
- **Domestic abuse prevention advice** – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.
- **Specialist support for victims**
 - **Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics** (including ‘by and for’), such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to].
 - **Designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs** such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support [not limited to], including sign posting accordingly.
- **Children’s support** – including play therapy, child advocacy or a specialist children worker (for example, a young people’s violence advisor, IDVA or outreach worker specialised in working with children).
- **Housing-related support** – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- **Advice service** – including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and,
- **Counselling and therapy** – (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.

Background

The most recent Shropshire Council Domestic Abuse Strategy & Action Plan (2018-2020) was approved by the Council's Cabinet and the Community Safety Partnership. It aimed to improve services for victims of domestic abuse within Shropshire and to respond effectively to domestic violence and abuse.

The priorities set were to:

- Prevent domestic abuse
- Ensure co-ordinated and sustainable services are delivered to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse

The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) enhances collaboration and effectiveness in safeguarding efforts by involving various agencies to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults through multi-agency collaboration, regular communication, and specialized training. The SSCP has adopted these priorities and continues to work towards achieving them.

Addressing domestic abuse has been a priority for Shropshire Council and its partners for several years. For instance, the 2022 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment identified key areas for improvement, such as increasing safe accommodation and enhancing support services for victims and their children.

Governed by the Community Safety Partnership, the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) also focuses on broader domestic abuse issues and ensures a coordinated approach to safeguarding and supporting victims. Following the 2022 Needs Assessment, the DALPB developed success statements to guide their efforts, including ensuring that Section 47 Child Protection, Section 42 Adult Safeguarding, and Anti-Social Behaviour investigations always consider domestic abuse, whether current or historic.

The 2024 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment led to the creation of this domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy.

Context – Shropshire Data

Shropshire is a rural county in the Northwest Midlands, bordering Wales. In 2021 Shropshire had a population of 323,600². 50.6% (163,900) of the population was female and 49.4% (159,700) of the population was male. Shropshire was seen to have a high proportion of older age groups compared to children.

² [Shropshire Council \(2021\) Shropshire's profile](#)

Age Group	Under 15s	15-64s	Over 65s
Population	48,000	193,600	82,000
% of Population	14.83%	59.83%	25.3%

In 2021, 96.7% of Shropshire's population classified themselves as White, compared to 81% in England and 81.7% in the West Midlands. Among those identifying as White, 93.3% were White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British³.

The proportion of people identifying as 'White Other' increased from 2% in 2011 to 2.8% in 2021. Apart from 'White Other', all major ethnic groups saw relatively small increases in both number and proportion since 2011.

The second largest ethnic group in Shropshire was Asian, Asian British, or Asian Welsh, accounting for 1.3% of the population, which is significantly lower than in England (9.6%) and the West Midlands (13.3%). This group's proportion increased from 1.0% in 2011 to 1.3% in 2021. Importantly, there has been a small increase in ethnicity diversity, making Shropshire more diverse than it was in 2011.

Shropshire, being predominantly rural, is less ethnically diverse compared to other areas of England. However, despite this, the county is home to farming communities, migrant workers, and other diverse groups. This unique blend means that Shropshire's diversity looks different.

There were 139,579 households living in Shropshire in March 2021⁴. 41% of housing in Shropshire is detached, and 33.5% is semi-detached. 6.1% are flats⁵.

Tenure	% in Shropshire
Owned outright or Owned with a mortgage or loan	68.6%
Private renting	17.5%
Social renting	13%

The Shropshire domestic abuse needs assessment 2024⁶ applied the nationally recognised statistics that 1 in 3 females are subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime and 1 in 6 men and estimated the following prevalence in Shropshire:

	Women	Men
Number of people in Shropshire be subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime	54,000	27,000

³ [Shropshire Council \(2022b\) census 2021 data- Ethnicity, national identity, language and religion](#)

⁴ [Shropshire Council \(2023\) Census 2021 data tenure bulletin](#)

⁵ [Census \(2021\) Residents in households and communal establishments](#)

⁶ [Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024](#)

Shropshire Domestic abuse Needs Assessment 2024

Process

In August 2024, Shropshire Council conducted a domestic abuse needs assessment to guide the commissioning of accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe housing, in accordance with Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act. Beyond meeting the statutory duty, the needs assessment aimed to inform broader strategy and foster a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

To develop the needs assessment, a member of Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Prevention Team engaged with practitioners and leaders from various services and organizations across both statutory and voluntary sectors, including the local authority and health services. Additionally, data was gathered from statutory and community services.

Furthermore, 5 survivors were interviewed over the phone, another 5 participated in a focus group, and 44 survivors completed a survey. All participants were recruited through specialist services, the Lived Experience Advisory Group, or identified as homeless, under the guidance of Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Lived Experience Project Officer.

Current provision of safe accommodation

The refuge provision in Shropshire is delivered by Connexus, a Registered Social Landlord, under the name Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS). The current Shropshire-wide contract, established in 2023, spans three years. Connexus owns the majority of the accommodation while Shropshire Council commissions the accommodation-based support for adults and children, along with additional funding for outreach services.

There are 22 units of accommodation located across Shropshire:

- Ten units in a women's only refuge ('main refuge'), including space for 15 children. All have shared facilities. There is one single occupancy room, one unit is wheelchair accessible and there is a wet room.
- Seven units in dispersed refuge accommodation, including space for eight children: one property providing two units for female survivors including space for three children; one property providing three units for female survivors including space for three children; and one property with two units for male survivors, one of these units can accommodate two children, and the units are wheelchair accessible with a wet room in the bathroom. All dispersed properties have shared living space, kitchen/dining area, and bathrooms.
- 5 self-contained units for single women experiencing domestic abuse and who have multiple disadvantages. These disadvantages often include mental health issues, substance use and involvement with the criminal justice system

According to the Shropshire domestic abuse needs assessment 2024 the SDAS accommodation-based service received 307 referrals, 165 in 2022/23 and 142 in 2023/24.

The table below compares women and men referred to, and becoming resident in, refuge. This data was provided by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS).

	Women		Men		Not disclosed/unknown		Trans/nonbinary	
	*Referred	Resident	*Referred	Resident	*Referred	Resident	*Referred	Resident
2022/23 & 2023/24	268	122	16	8	22	0	1	2

* This does not include any referrals that were immediately declined at first contact due to capacity

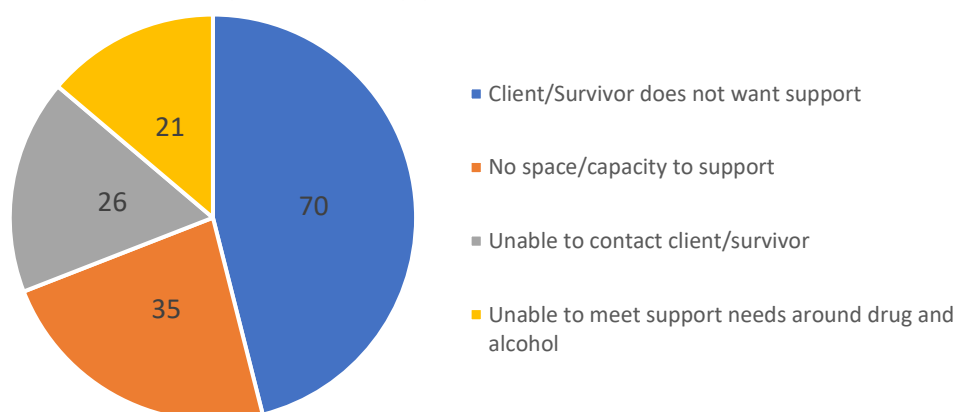
The demographic breakdown of individuals accessing refuge accommodation highlighted the following:

- Ethnicity: this was in line with population data for Shropshire.
- Gender: this was as expected when compared with national and local prevalence data; when comparing the average length of stay, men appeared to spend much longer in refuge than women.
- Age: the higher proportion of older people residing in Shropshire was not reflected in referral data, with only 1 client aged over 64.
- 17% (53 individuals) resident in refuge in 2022/24 were recorded as being disabled, suggesting a high level of accommodation for those with physical health needs or challenges.

Between 2022-2024, there were more referrals (59%) as would be expected with refuge provision, from out of area (183 referrals) than within area (124 referrals). Over the two-year period the majority of out of area referrals came from the West Midlands, with the highest being Telford and Wrekin (18%), Birmingham (4%) and Walsall (4%).

In 2022-2024, 69% of referrals to SDAS did not result in individuals/households being accepted into refuge provision, for both men and women. The main reason refuge was not provided was due to client not wanting support. Some of the other main reasons are listed below:

Main reasons for refuge not being provided (Number of clients)



SDAS launched a new refuge service named Acorns, in 2022 that aims to meet the needs of women facing multiple disadvantages, including drug and alcohol use and mental health related needs. The contract was standalone initially. However, in 2023 the contract referenced above became part of the main contract provision.

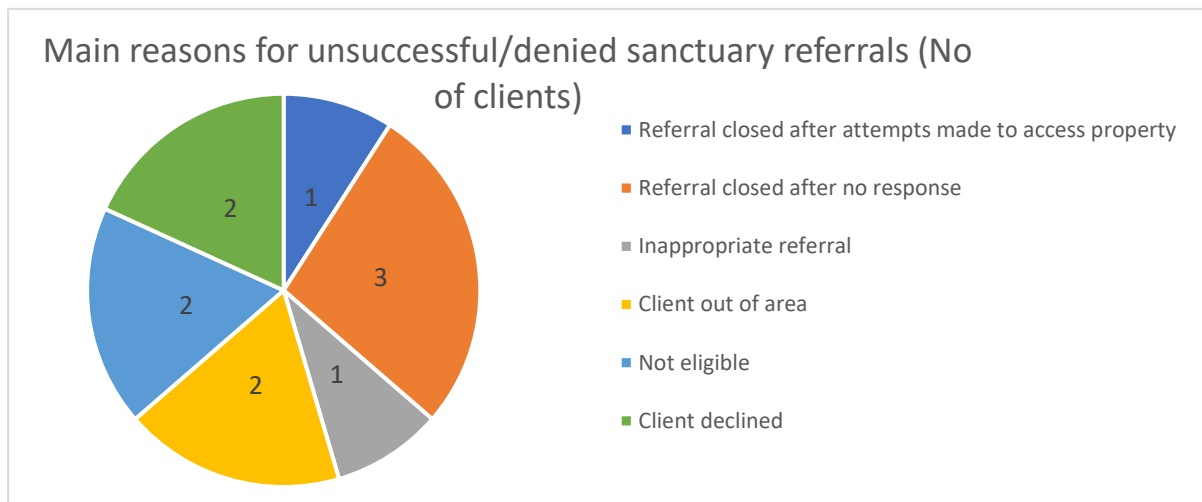
The Acorns service involves substance use and mental health services, which should have addressed the issues of unmet need found in the needs assessment relating to this cohort of victims/survivors in need of safe accommodation: However, the needs assessment identified (9.9%) of clients were still declined a space in refuge due to these types of needs.

Historically, West Mercia Police Design Out Crime Officers (DOCO) in Shropshire conducted crime risk assessments only for high-risk clients identified by the Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU). Clients not on a high-risk management plan did not receive these assessments.

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board agreed the design of a Sanctuary Scheme that meets national definitions, and for data to be gathered and collated that enables the partnership to understand the ongoing use of, and short/long term effectiveness of the Scheme.

In turn, a Council-run Sanctuary Scheme, launched in April 2023, now supports all households and individuals at risk of domestic abuse, regardless of tenure. Referrals are made by specialist service professionals. Eligibility requires the client to want to stay in the property, the perpetrator to no longer live there or have the right to remain, and landlord permission if the property is rented. This initiative helps prevent homelessness and offers victims/survivors the choice to remain in their homes through enhanced security measures and support.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, there were 50 referrals, with 78% accepted. The most common reason for declined referrals was no response (7.6%)



Feedback from survivors is collected after three months on the sanctuary scheme. The needs assessment includes this feedback and highlights those who received a Sanctuary Scheme assessment on their property felt safer and found the assessments helpful and reassuring.

Housing Services Responses

The Housing Options Team at Shropshire Council respond to and manage all homelessness applications including those from people fleeing domestic abuse. If temporary accommodation is required, this is passed to the Temporary Accommodation team to facilitate, following which individuals will be supported by the Housing Support Team. In 2024, there was the exploration of looking to co-locate a specialist domestic abuse support officer.

If an application is made to HomePoint, and the applicant mentions being a victim/survivor of domestic abuse in their information, this will be passed automatically to the Housing Options Team, who will contact the individual to progress a homelessness application. Applicants are not informed by HomePoint that their information is being passed across and consent is not sought. HomePoint will not classify a case as domestic abuse unless there has been physical violence, and it will be named relationship breakdown. Both categories are passed to the Housing Options Team. This procedure is still followed by the team, but as part of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA) the process will be revised.

The data included in the needs assessment was taken from the Housing Options Team database through a search for those homelessness applications coded as 'domestic abuse – victim' and 'domestic abuse' as the reasons for homelessness. There were 241 in 2022/23 and 304 in 2023/24. This shows an increase (21%) in homelessness applications in 2023/2024.

Commissioning Safe Accommodation and Support

The Council commissioned accommodation-based support in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the local needs and demand found by STADA in the 2022 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment. The service commenced on 1 April 2023 providing:

- Support to all victims aged 16+ who access any form of safe accommodation
- Support to children and young people living in safe accommodation with their parent

This commissioning has started to address the identified gaps in accommodation-based support by ensuring services are equipped to support older people, those with multiple disadvantage and by providing direct support to all age children and young people.

The wider needs of Shropshire have been considered and as such Shropshire Council is also commissioning other victim services to ensure all victims and survivors who need support are able to find it.

As part of our commitment to commissioning victim services we will look for:

- Collaborative / partnership approach to allow smaller by and for groups access to funding
- Accessible service(s) to meet the needs of differing ages, genders and cultures
- An understanding of all forms of domestic abuse to enable the right response

In addition to commissioning, other recommendations were made in the Needs Assessment to improve responses, and these can be found in Appendix 1.

Reviewing this Strategy and Developing a Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to review the needs assessment every year, and conduct a new needs assessment every three years, and in Shropshire this will be completed through the leadership of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The Board will also be accountable for the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this strategy and the commissioned service and reporting annually to central government.

We will follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy. Assess involves gathering data to understand the current strategy, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Plan sets clear goals and outlines steps, roles, and timelines. Do is the implementation phase, requiring flexibility to address challenges. Review evaluates outcomes against goals, analysing successes and areas for improvement. This cycle ensures continuous improvement and helps develop a robust, adaptable partnership strategy.

Using this approach will enable a cyclical approach which will meet our statutory duty.

Appendix 1 Needs Assessment Recommendations

Accommodation based headline recommendations

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service

- To explore the reason why a high proportion of clients decline support after being referred into refuge service.
- Acorns Service has been launched, so there is a need to fully explore why there are still individuals being unsuccessful/denied refuge provision due to service being unable to meet support needs around drug and alcohol.
- To explore the less common reasons for referrals to refuge being denied.
- wider understanding of their IDVA service and what that provides for them to look at their delivery model to manage the increase in referral rates
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service to consider the recommendation in the 2022 Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment around developing a plan for a new refuge whilst working with commissioners to identify the type of safe accommodation required.
- Partners may need to explore further the gaps in unmet need that have yet to be identified before making a final decision on this.

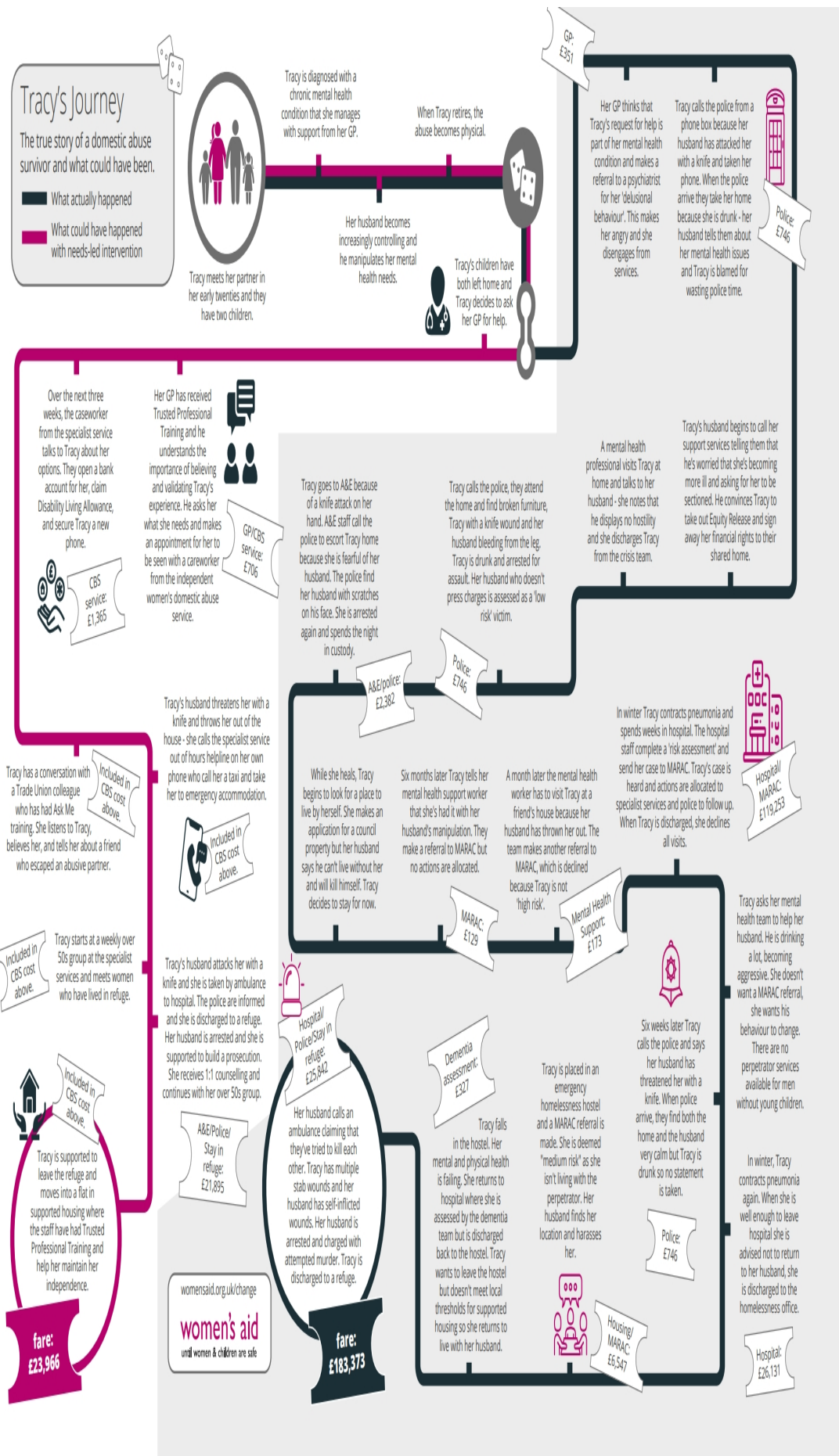
Sanctuary Scheme

- For Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme Coordinators to work with West Mercia Police, to gather data in relation to clients receiving assessments in Shropshire to create a comprehensive picture on the delivery of the Scheme - Sanctuary Scheme Co-ordinators to record the date of birth of clients referred into the service consistently, to provide the demographic data.
- Domestic Abuse Prevention Team to promote the Shropshire Sanctuary Scheme to various professionals to ensure they are aware of how to refer into the scheme, the criteria, and the process, to ensure that the scheme is being utilised.

Shropshire Council Housing Service

- For the Shropshire Council Housing Service to review their domestic abuse pages available to the public to ensure that it is easily accessible and includes all necessary information.
- For a domestic abuse training plan to be put together that all Shropshire Council Housing Teams must complete. Part of the plan will be to undertake regular refresher training once all modules have been completed.

- When focussing on development, ensure that all forms of housing, including sheltered and supported accommodation, are safe and appropriate.
- Training and referral pathways: Providing an appropriate level of training for staff - according to their role
- Raising awareness of the Domestic Abuse Directory of services accessed via Shropshire Council Well Being pages on the internal intranet.
- Updating the external internet Housing pages so victim/survivors know how and where to access support. External internet pages must also include information for perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure they are aware of how they can access support to change their behaviour.
- Shropshire Council should progress with the Whole Housing Approach (WHA) including gaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation.
- For all teams in the housing service, to consider their domestic abuse response by creating a set of policies and procedures.
- To explore further co-located DA specialists within the housing teams.
- When a victim/survivor (and any accompanying children) is placed in temporary accommodation, an appropriately trained Housing Support Officer is assigned to provide support within 48 hours. The support should be focused on reducing isolation, access to food, improving awareness of local amenities, and should be delivered in a trauma informed way.
- Before placing a victim/survivor in temporary accommodation, the local authority must carry out necessary checks to assure itself of the suitability and safety of the building and its surrounding environment.
- When placing perpetrators of domestic abuse in temporary accommodation, there must be careful consideration to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved. In order to do so, best practices around managing perpetrators of domestic abuse in temporary accommodation must be explored and followed.
- Ensure that survivors of domestic abuse, are signposted where necessary to furniture and clothing access which include but are not limited to local furniture schemes, little stars for children's clothing, baby stop and the Welfare Support Team.



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Committee and Date
Council
17th July 2025

Item

Public



Appointment to Outside Bodies, Committees and Groups

Responsible Officer:		Tim Collard - Service Director - Legal and Governance	
email:	tim.collard@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 252756
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Councillor Heather Kidd - Leader	

1. Synopsis

At the last Council meeting it was agreed that the list of appointments to Outside Bodies committees and groups would be reported to the July Council meeting.

2. Executive Summary

This report sets out the appointment of Shropshire Council representatives to the various outside bodies, committees and groups made by the Working Group.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To note the agreed appointments as attached at Appendix 1 & 2.
- 3.2 To note that Councillor Heather Kidd has replaced Councillor Roger Evans on the Local Government Association General Assembly and Councillor Dawn Husemann has been appointed to the vacancies on the Local Government Association General Assembly and the County Council Network Council.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The appointment to outside bodies, committees and groups will have no obvious implications.

5. Financial Implications

The appointment to outside bodies, committees and groups will have no obvious financial implications.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

The appointment to outside bodies, committees and groups will have no obvious impact in terms of climate change.

7. Background

- 7.1 A small working group comprising of Group Leaders or their nominated representatives met on 10th June 2025 to agree appointments to the various outside bodies, committees and groups. The agreed appointments are attached for noting.
- 7.2 Subsequent to the Annual Council meeting, Councillor Heather Kidd has replaced Councillor Roger Evans on the Local Government Association General Assembly and Councillor Dawn Husemann has been appointed to the vacancies on the Local Government Association General Assembly and the County Council Network Council.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Schedule of Outside Bodies

Local Member: Not applicable

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Outside Bodies Appointments

Appendix 2 – Committees and Groups Appointments

Outside Bodies Appointments

Organisation	No.	Appointed 1	Appointed 2	Appointed 3	Appointed 4	Appointed 5	Appointed 6
John Allatt's Educational Foundation	3	Adam Fejfer	Jon Tandy	Rob Wilson			
Ash Schoolhouse Charity	1	Greg Ebbs					
Bayston Hill Quarry Liaison Committee	1	Teri Trickett					
Berwick Almshouse Charity	1	Alex Wagner					
Birchmeadow Park Management Committee	1	Caroline Bagnall					
Bishops Castle and District Lifeline Company (Trading as Enterprise SW Shropshire)	3	Ruth Houghton	Heather Kidd	Sam Walmsley			
Bowdler's Educational Foundation	6	Bernie Bentick	Adam Fejfer	Julian Dean	Brendan Mallon	Mandy Duncan	Kate Halliday
Brookes Educational Foundation	1	Elizabeth Barker					
Childe School Endowment Fund – Trustee	2	David Davies	Pamela Davies				
Edwards and Hinksman's Foundation (Neen Savage)	2	David Davies	Peter Dolphin - Neen Savage Parish Councillor				
Elizabeth Barbour's Educational Foundation	1	Malcolm Myles-Hook					
English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)	1	David Vasmer					
Future Bridgnorth Partnership	3	Rachel Connolly	Colin Taylor	Susan Eden			
Future Oswestry Group	2	James Owen	Rob Wilson				
Ludlow Future Partnership	3	Andrew Boddington	Viv Parry	Beverley Waite			
Gorsuch, Langley and Prynce Charity	1	Jamie Daniels					
Hanmer-Morris Charity	1	Craig Emery					
Higginson's Church of England School – Educational Charity	1	Sho Abdul					
Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group	1	Caroline Bagnall					
Market Drayton Sports Association Ltd	1	Jeremy Blandford					
Mayfair Trust	1	Mark Morris					

Outside Bodies Appointments

Melverley Internal Drainage Board	2	Duncan Borrowman	Ed Potter				
Midland Joint Advisory Council for Environmental Pollution	1	David Vasmer					
Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	1	Dawn Husemann					
Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust	2	Duncan Borrowman	David Walker				
National Association of British Market Authorities (nabma)	2	Teri Trickett	Alex Wagner				
Newcastle Church of England School Charity	1	Sam Walmsley					
W Norton Foundation	1	Joshua Dickin					
PATROL (Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	1	Rob Wilson					
Rea Internal Drainage Board	2	Roger Evans	Nick Hignett				
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital - Stakeholder Governor for Shropshire Council	1	Craig Emery					
Roy Fletcher Centre Management Committee	2	Roger Evans	Alan Mosley				
Severn Gorge Countryside Trust	1	Caroline Bagnall					
Shifnal Exhibition Foundation	1	Elizabeth Barker					
Shrewsbury & District Arts Association	1	Julian Dean					
Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership Board	1	Rob Wilson					
Shrewsbury Town Centre Regeneration Stakeholder Group	3	Rob Wilson	Alex Wagner	Julian Dean			
Shrewsbury Moves	1	Rob Wilson					
Shrewsbury School Governing Body	2	Ed Potter	Bernie Bentick				
Shropshire Economic Partnership Board	2	Heather Kidd	Rob Wilson				
Shropshire Good Food Partnership (SGFP) Advisory Board	2	Dawn Husemann	Viv Parry				

Outside Bodies Appointments

Shropshire Playing Fields Association	2	Nigel Lumby	Carl Rowley				
Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing Limited (STaRH) - Board of	2	Mark Owen	Duncan Kerr				
Shropshire Youth Association Executive Committee	1	Neil Bentley					
Shropshire Youth Foundation	1	Neil Bentley					
St Leonard's Weaver and Bluecoat Trust	1	Christian Lea					
The Cambrian Line Rail Committee	2	Robert Jones	Chris Lemon				
The Heart of Wales Line Community Rail Partnership Steering Group	1	Sam Walmsley					
The 3 Counties Connected Community Rail Partnership Steering Group	1	Robert Jones					
Thomas Benyon's Educational Foundation	1	Greg Ebbs					
Victoria Hall (Broseley) Management Committee	1	Caroline Bagnall					
West Midland Reserve Forces & Cadets Association	1	Gary Groves					
Wolverhampton Airport Consultative Committee (WACC)	1	Dawn Husemann					
Worthen CE School House Charity	1	Heather Kidd					
Walker Trust	2	Duncan Borrowman	Gary Groves				

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List of Committees and Groups Appointments

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Chief Officer Employment Panel The Leaders of the three main political parties (or their nominees), and two other members subject to the proportionality rules. The Assistant Director of Workforce and Improvement or their nominated deputy will provide relevant advice. The Chair of the Panel will be the Leader of the Council or his/her nominated deputy. Where the appointment/dismissal does not relate to the Chief Executive – Head of Paid Service, he/she will also provide advice to the Panel.	To implement the process for the appointment, dismissal and disciplinary action in respect of certain senior officers and provided for by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 and the Senior Officer Employment Procedure as agreed by full Council on 21st March 2024) Hearing and determining any appeals from Chief Officers as appropriate under the Council's discipline, grievance, performance management and grading policies, the suspension of sick pay and the review and determination of matters relating to contracts of employment.	Heather Kidd Dawn Husemann Dan Thomas Plus 2 additional Liberal Democrat Members

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
General Appeals Panel (Members of the Council – Membership of the Panel shall normally be 3 drawn from a Panel List established by the Council)	To determine any complaint, appeal or other matter referred to it by any Chief Officer arising in connection with the exercise of any function and to determine such complaints or appeals as may by law be required to be determined by a Committee of the Authority arising in connection with any function. (In determining any such matter each Panel shall have regard to the agreed policies of the Council and the availability of any necessary finance. The Panel shall also have the right to refer any matter of policy or budgetary provision to Cabinet or the appropriate body/person with delegated authority with such recommendations as it sees fit.) <i>[Note: Each Appeals Panel should be appointed by the Operations Director from a Panels List established by the Council and shall comprise such numbers of Members and independent persons as may be required by law provided that where the composition is not governed by law the membership of each panel shall normally be 3.]</i> <i>[Note: Each Panel's List comprises of Councillors and the composition of the Lists (or any Panel) need not necessarily be politically balanced.]</i>	Caroline Bagley Ed Bird Susan Coleman Julian Dean Roger Evans George Hollyhead Dawn Husemann Duncan Kerr Brendan Mallon David Minnery Alan Mosley Wendy Owen Carl Rowley Colin Taylor David Vasmer
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Joint Adoption Panel (1 Member of the Council plus others as set specified by the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.)	To make recommendations to the Adoption Agency (Shropshire / Telford & Wrekin Councils) in respect of children and prospective adopters.	Vicky Moore

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Shropshire Council Fostering Panel (1 Member of the Council plus others as specified by the Fostering Service Regulations (England) 2011.)	To make recommendations to the Fostering Agency (Shropshire Council) in respect of fostering matters and prospective foster carers.	Andy Davis
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (3 Members of the Council, 6 teacher representatives, 5 Church of England representatives and 14 representatives of other religions)	To advise the LEA on religious worship and education.	Roger Evans Andy Davis *3 rd vacancy filled by the LA from the Humanist Society
Housing Review Panel (Members of the Council) – Membership of the Panel shall normally be 3 drawn from the General Appeals Panel.)	(a) To determine requests by Introductory Tenants for a review of decisions to seek an order for possession. (b) To determine requests for a review of decisions in relation to homelessness. (c) To determine requests by Flexible Tenants for a review of a decision as to the length of the tenancy offered. (d) To determine requests by Flexible Tenants for a review of a decision to not grant a further flexible tenancy. (e) To determine requests for a review of a decision to seek possession under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. <i>Onward delegations to officers are set out in Part 8 of this Constitution</i>	As per the General Appeals Panel

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Shropshire Schools Forum 2 Members of the Council as observers <i>5 Primary school headteachers</i> <i>2 Secondary school headteachers</i> <i>4 Primary School governors</i> <i>1 Secondary school governors</i> <i>1 representative for the special school headteacher/governing body group</i> <i>1 pupil referral units group</i> <i>7 Academy Headteacher/governing body group</i> <i>7 places for non-schools members (the 7 non schools member places shall be reserved for:</i> <i>1 nominee from Early Years providers</i> <i>3 nominees of the Diocesan Directors of Education</i> <i>1 nominee of the trade unions and professional associations</i> <i>1 nominee from the 14 – 19 partnership</i> <i>1 nominee from the Shropshire School Governors Council)</i>	To advise the Council on matters relating to the schools budget as well as acting as a consultative body on other aspects of resources, policy and service development.	Julian Dean Brendan Mallon

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Local Admissions Forum 3 elected Members including relevant Portfolio Holder 2 representatives from community and voluntary controlled schools 4 representatives from foundation, Catholic and CE aided and special schools 2 Church of England Diocesan Board representatives 1 Roman Catholic Diocese representative 2 Parent Governor representatives (primary and secondary) 2 local community representatives (Early Years and Service Families Children's Services) 2 representatives from neighbouring authorities (Telford and Wrekin and Staffordshire) The Forum can also ask for other representation	To advise the Council on admission issues and arrangements as more fully set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.	Caroline Bagnall Mandy Duncan Andy Hall
The Mere Advisory Board (3 Members of the Council & 3 Ellesmere Town Councillors and 3 representatives from local community interest groups.)	To advise Cabinet upon and implement approved policies for the management of the Cremore Gardens, The Mere, The Moors, The Boathouse Restaurant and the Swan Hill Workshop, Ellesmere.	Sarah Marston James Owen Rosie Radford

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership 4 Members of the Council – Relevant Portfolio Holders or Local Members Representatives	To promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, character and landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB and the surrounding project area as a local, regional and national asset. To promote compatible social, environmental and economic development and the well being of constituent communities. In pursuit of these ends, to prepare, monitor and review the statutory management plan for the AONB and to co ordinate its implementation.	George Hollyhead Heather Kidd Colin Stanford David Vasmer

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Employees Joint Consultative Committee (5 Members of the Council)	To establish regular means of negotiation between the Council and the employees in order to prevent differences and to recommend a settlement should they arise. To consider any matter referred to it by Cabinet or the Council, or the Human Resources Committee, or by the employees represented by any Trade Union recognised for negotiating purposes by the Council as representing the employees. To make recommendations to Cabinet or the Council and the Human Resources Committee on matters relating to the application of the Terms and Conditions of Service of officers employed under JNC for Chief Officers' Conditions of Service. To discharge such other functions, specifically assigned by the Council to the Committee. To establish a regular means of negotiation between the Council and the employees in order to prevent differences and to recommend a settlement should they arise. To consider any matter referred to it by Cabinet or the Council or by the employees represented by any Trade Union recognised for negotiating purposes by the Council as representing employees. To make recommendations to Cabinet or the Council on matters relating to the application of the Terms and Conditions of Service of officers employed under the JNC for Chief Officers' Conditions of Service. To establish regular methods of consultation between the Council and its employees subject to Green and Blue book Conditions of Service. To discharge such other functions, specifically assigned by the Council to the Committee.	Heather Kidd Roger Evans Alex Wagner Dawn Husemann Dan Thomas

Committee(s) or Group(s)	Function	Representatives appointed
Asset Assurance Board 2 x Council Members not being Board Members of STaRH Limited The Portfolio holder with responsibility for Housing functions of the Council. Senior officer responsible for Housing, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer.	To provide a high level framework for discussing future efficiencies, investment opportunities and key challenges and for ensuring that the broad strategic direction of ST&RH is complementary to wider Council priorities .	Rosemary Dartnall Julian Dean James Owen
Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board Membership will be drawn from representatives of each of the political groups on Shropshire Council and Council officers, together with representatives of the community-led Shropshire Climate Action Partnership, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. The Board will be chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder	The Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will discuss, suggest review and recommend projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire.	Rosemary Dartnall Julian Dean Sharon Ritchie-Simmons Ed Potter David Vasmer

Changes to Committee Membership

Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Brian Evans to replace Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies as a member of the Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Thomas Clayton to replace Councillor Brian Evans as a substitute member of the Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Rhys Gratton to be a substitute member of the Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Andy Davis to be a substitute member of the Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Andy Davis to replace Councillor Jamie Daniels as a member of the Northern Planning Committee

Councillor Jamie Daniels to replace Councillor Andy Davis as a substitute member of the Northern Planning Committee

Audit Committee

Councillor Rhys Gratton to replace Councillor David Minnery as a member of the Audit Committee

Pensions Committee

Councillor Ben Jephcott to be a substitute on the Pensions Committee

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