Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Emily Denne and I am CEO of Voices charity.

Voices is a small Bath based, grassroots organisation that provides Domestic Abuse survivors prevention and recovery support.

We were founded ten years ago by four survivors of Domestic Abuse who recognised that while support existed for those in crisis, there was a significant gap - no one was prioritising their recovery, or that of their children.

A decade on and we continue to be led by the voices of lived experience, working to support survivors of abuse, not just to recover, but to thrive. Our outcomes measures consistently demonstrate the profound impact of our work:

- 85% of clients feel more capable of recognising abusive behavior as a result of our support.
- 91% gain a deeper understanding of the impact of abuse on children, thereby breaking the cycle of abuse for future generations.
- 81% of clients reported improved health and well-being, underscoring the effectiveness of our holistic approach to recovery.
- 85% expressed an increased understanding of trauma and how to manage their symptoms.

Nationally, there is a cost of living crisis and grants and trusts are closing down or changing their parameters. As we move into a new financial year, Voices is facing its toughest year to date, with many of our existing funding sources set to end in March.

At the same time, every year, we see an increase in our referral numbers and the demand on our service consistently outweighs capacity. This is only set to rise, with the news that another wonderful local charity providing trauma-informed support is due to close in March as a result of a lack of funding.

The financial costs of Domestic Abuse are stark. It costs the UK £66 billion per annum; with research by the Government indicating that the average cost of domestic abuse per individual victim is £34,215. Without preventative and recovery services, these costs will only increase.

We know that every £1 spent on victim services represents a £9 saving to the public purse. Put simply, it is a false economy to not fund Domestic Abuse support - and yet we receive no support from the Council.

Today therefore, I am asking you to change this. Can the council provide financial support to Voices?

If you cannot provide financial support, I urge you to consider helping us in alternative ways. Can you help us with a fundraising drive, can you share our communications, or can you offer infrastructure and a safe space to deliver our services?

Please support Voices and help us continue to keep delivering trauma informed specialist services for victims and survivors across BANES.

Thank you.