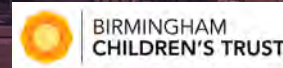
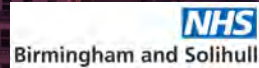
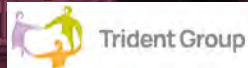


BIRMINGHAM **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Prevention strategy

Working Together to Transform Lives



Birmingham Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership

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1. Glossary

of Terms and Acronyms

Commissioned – specialised providers formally chosen by public bodies to deliver specific services to vulnerable citizens following a rigorous commissioning process

Domestic Abuse – any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between anyone aged 16+ who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, an emotional.

DHR (Domestic Homicide Review) – a review into the circumstances around a death of an individual following domestic abuse. Public bodies (police, councils, social services, etc) come together to understand and learn from the circumstances and help raise awareness in local communities of how to help victims.

Early Intervention – an integrated public body approach, to support people to recover faster and live healthier and more independent lives.

IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) - a national project which works with GP professionals, offering training and advice on how to recognise and enquire about domestic abuse, along with offering dedicated support service for victims.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) – a meeting bringing agencies together to undertake a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs including any children, and link them, and the perpetrator to appropriate services.

Marginalised communities - those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life including ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, people with physical and mental disabilities, LGBTQ+, and older people.

Misogyny – is a hatred, contempt, or prejudice against women or girls. It is a form of sexism that can keep women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the social roles of patriarchy impact the confidence, wellbeing, and economic progress of women.

Multi-agency – involves professionals from different agencies working together to reduce duplication and improve services, whilst saving money.

Perpetrators - people who use abusive behaviours and actions to cause harm.

Prevention – not all problems can be prevented, but for those that can, by providing people with the early support it reduces the need for crisis intervention.

Superdiverse – and unprecedented variety of cultures, identities, faiths, languages, and immigration statuses, creating rapid and fragmented change.

Trauma Informed – a practice of increasing a professional's awareness of how trauma can impact individuals and delivering support in a personal way.

Victims/survivors - someone who has been subjected to domestic abuse.

Whole System – local stakeholders come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenges and consider how the local system operates bringing change through shared activities in an integrated way with long term benefit

2. Commitment Statement and Foreword

by Chair and Vice Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership Board

Welcome to the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2024+. This strategy is intended for 2024 to 2029, but will be reviewed in 2027. The strategy was created in partnership with key stakeholders across the city as a strategy for Birmingham, recognising that no single agency can stop domestic abuse alone. Every agency across the whole system has a collective responsibility to support survivors, including children, at the earliest point, and to hold perpetrators of abuse to account.

Domestic abuse is a serious issue, both nationally and here in Birmingham. It has a devastating, long-lasting impact upon the safety, health and wider life chances of women, children, and families. It has been a leading cause of homelessness, nationwide and in Birmingham, for several years. It is also a leading cause for children's services referrals and often results in the need for police support and the criminal justice system. Most importantly, when survivors are not supported effectively, domestic abuse can end in murder or suicide.

Birmingham's previous strategy, "Changing Lives Changing attitudes, Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023", outlined a proactive early intervention and prevention model, highlighting the importance of identifying domestic abuse as early as possible to limit its impact in the future, whilst providing support and safety. We must also change attitudes and fight victim blaming narratives, holding those who perpetrate abuse and violence accountable for their actions putting the blame where it belongs to be.

There were significant achievements in implementing this strategy including:

- Commissioning of the first of its kind Domestic Abuse Hub to provide one stop holistic support for survivors.
- Embedding of domestic abuse in health settings, like the IRIS programme in 170 GP surgeries, and Health IDVAs and specialised Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Leads in sexual health and hospitals.

- Developing best practice across the Birmingham Children's Trust through close collaboration with specialist domestic abuse organisations.
- Commissioning of children and family work in refuges, with agencies raising awareness of the Domestic Abuse Act and the impact on children.

However, we recognise there is more to do to provide effective, coordinated support to survivors of domestic abuse, and to hold perpetrators to account for their actions. This strategy brings together partners across the city to prevent escalation of domestic abuse, and provide effective, tailored support at the point of need for survivors.

This strategy was shaped by those with lived experience, and we are grateful for their valuable input. We know that the voice of survivors in this work is fundamental, we acknowledge that this is an ongoing process, and we will continue to strengthen our engagement with survivors on the delivery of this strategy.

Following consultation, our strategy will use the word ‘survivor’ to describe people subjected to domestic abuse. This recognises that though someone faced victimisation at the hands of their abuser, they have used great resilience and strength to survive it.

This strategy also uses the word ‘perpetrator’ throughout, to refer to people who use abusive behaviours and actions. Survivors felt strongly that perpetrators of domestic abuse must be held to account for their behaviours, and this is reflected in the language we use

We also acknowledge that we are facing huge financial challenges across the city, and this strategy requires partners, more than ever, to work collaboratively, utilising the resources that we have to ensure that all survivors are supported. With further resources, we would work hard to prevent domestic abuse in the first place, and to manage perpetrator to prevent repeat offending. However, our aims for the next five years set forward in this strategy, take account the reality of the financial challenges our city is facing and focus on achievable outcomes for survivors.

As the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board, we are committed to the implementation of the strategy, and continuing to tackle domestic abuse together.

Councillor Nikki Brennan

Chair of Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board
Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities

And

Maureen Connolly

Vice Chair of Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board
Chief Executive - Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid

3. Introduction

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 define domestic abuse, as: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other.”

The Act also, for the first time, recognises children who are related to the abused or abuser, and who see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, as victims in their own right.

This strategy is written in the context of the above definition and the understanding that domestic abuse is a gendered crime with the vast majority of survivors being women, as a result of misogyny. Women are more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence and be subjected to sustained physical, psychological, emotional abuse and coercive control. Nationally, around 80% of victims of domestic homicide are women. In Birmingham 74% of domestic abuse calls made to the police are from women, and 943 of the 992 homeless presentations as a result of domestic abuse were women.

However, we are acutely aware that domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, gender, race, religion or belief, socioeconomic circumstances or any disability or limiting condition they may have. It can also affect people at any time throughout their life, from pre-birth, childhood, to working age adults and the elderly. We aim to ensure that there are services for all survivors of domestic abuse, including male survivors.

Our strong history of partnership working across Birmingham has led our response to tackling domestic abuse and builds on our previous strategy “Changing Lives Changing attitudes -Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023”. In implementing this strategy, we have made significant strides in tackling domestic abuse.

Despite this progress we recognise that there is much work to do. Evidence shows that domestic abuse in Birmingham, as with other areas, continues to increase significantly.

Nationally, the police receive a domestic abuse call on average every 30 seconds. 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner. In Birmingham there were 56 Domestic Homicide Reviews from April 2011 to March 2024.

The Covid 19 pandemic and lockdown directives had a devastating impact on survivors and the subsequent cost of living crisis has only added to this, exacerbating an already dire situation.

The rising numbers of domestic abuse incidents have resulted in a surge in demand on already stretched public services like the Police, Health, Housing and Children’s Services. Domestic abuse continues to be the root cause of countless presentations: in 2023 it was the third highest cause of homelessness in the city, and the second highest reason for referrals to Birmingham Children’s Trust. Due to the complex nature of domestic abuse, survivors continue to reach out for help at crisis point, resulting in costly statutory interventions at a time of huge financial challenges for public sector services.

To make a change, we need to think and act differently. We need to embed an approach that firmly puts prevention first, increasing public awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and shifting cultural attitudes to no longer tolerate domestic abuse, to stop domestic abuse from taking place. We also need to intervene earlier to prevent escalation of abuse at every point.

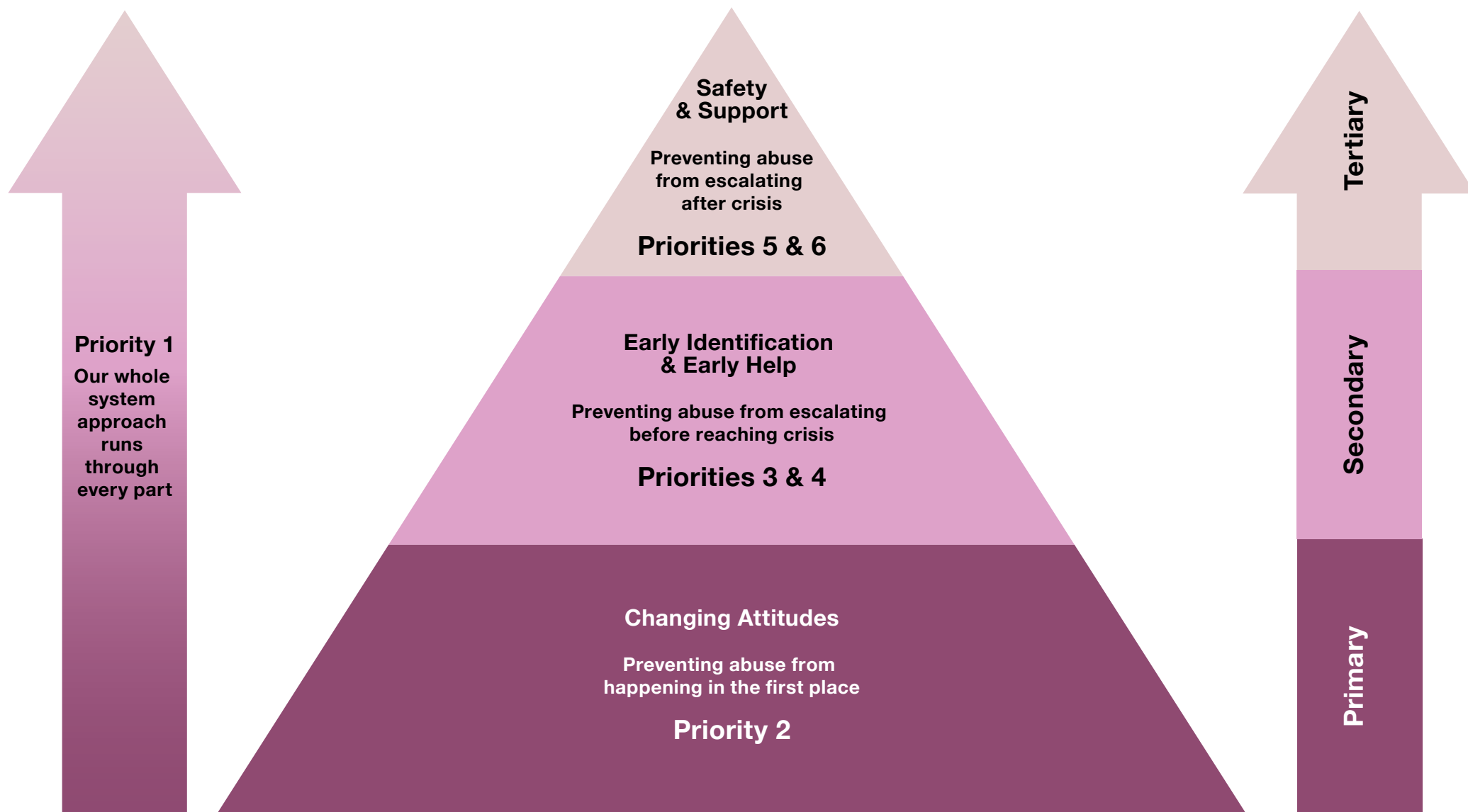
OUR VISION
Birmingham is a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse.

4. Prevention Approach

At the heart of our approach to tackling domestic abuse and delivering our vision of a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse, is prevention. In this Domestic Abuse Prevention strategy, we aim to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place and where it has occurred, whether or not the survivor has reached a point of crisis, to prevent abuse from escalating or recurring.

There has been limited preventative work around domestic abuse nationally and internationally, with little useful data to evidence which approaches are most effective. Our prevention approach has been informed by what local domestic abuse survivors and specialists have told us is needed in Birmingham.

The priorities identified will each play a role in preventing domestic abuse from happening in the first place and preventing abuse from escalating. Our first priority - to embed a whole system approach to domestic abuse - will need to run through each stage of prevention.



5. Values, Scope of the Strategy and Equality

Values and Principles

We know that it is not just what we do, but the way we work, which makes the difference. Therefore, the strategy is underpinned by these fundamental values and principles:

- **Survivor-centred and survivor-led** - tailored, trauma-informed support to survivors (including children), recognising safety as paramount, going at her pace throughout.
- **Strength-based** - recognise all the survivor has done to keep herself and her children safe, that she is the expert and is in no way to blame for perpetrator's behaviour.
- **Early Intervention and Prevention** - prevent abuse from happening in the first place and prevent the escalation of risk.
- **Accountability** - recognise all actions the perpetrator takes to abuse, including using children to control and post-separation abuse, and hold them accountable.
- **Intersectionality** - remove barriers to support for marginalised communities, actively adopt anti-racist practice and support intersecting needs like mental health or substance addiction.
- **Robust partnership response** - whole systems response to domestic abuse with strong and simple pathways to quality assured support services, ensuring the right support at the right time from all professionals.

Scope

This strategy responds to:

- Adults (predominantly women) who are subject to domestic abuse.
- Children (under the age of 18 years) who are subject to domestic abuse.
- Adults (predominantly men) who are perpetrating domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by intimate partners, ex-partners, and family members aged 16 and over. This strategy recognises that a wide range of people can perpetrate domestic abuse, including wider family members, and that all perpetrators must be held to account for their actions.

Equality in our Response to Domestic Abuse

We know that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, from any background, in any relationship.

The majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, or against other men that they are in a relationship with. Male violence accounts for the vast majority of serious harm and deaths through domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is the systematic abuse of power and control and is fundamentally linked to the inequality of women and girls under the patriarchal system. Inequality between men and women not only increases the opportunity for the abuse of power; but society's handling of the issues makes it harder for women to live free from violence. It is clear that effectively responding to domestic abuse requires actions that take account of broader gender inequalities.

This does not discount the responsibilities instilled by the Public Sector Duty (s149) of the Equalities Act 2010 to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination,

advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups. As such, this strategy also takes account of and responds to the needs of population groups sharing the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender identity
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

To reflect this, hereafter, this strategy will use the language of 'women', 'children', and 'groups sharing protected characteristics'.

6. Understanding Domestic Abuse, its Impact and Legislation

What is Domestic Abuse?

- Physical violence, and threats of physical violence.
- Sexual violence, and threats of sexual violence.
- Controlling aspects of the survivor's life, such as dictating what she wears, and who she sees.
- Setting and enforcing arbitrary rules, such as the time dinner must be on the table, or the amount of time the survivor can be out at the supermarket.
- Financial control, such as stopping the survivor from working, or taking out loans in her name.
- Emotional or psychological abuse.
- Spiritual abuse, such as using religious scripture to control the survivor.
- If the survivor has no recourse to public funds, threats to report her to be deported.
- Using the children to spy on the survivor, and report back to the abuser.
- Stalking - This is a high-risk behaviour. Examples include the perpetrator following the survivor or using technology and tracking devices to follow them.
- Technological abuse, such as constantly messaging or calling, or threatening to share intimate images.

Post-separation abuse – domestic abuse does not end once the survivor leaves the relationship, and in fact risk increases at this point. This may be constantly harassing, using child contact to continue to control, or threatening the survivor with violence.

Coercive control - is 'the micromanagement of everyday life, which crushes the spirit even more fundamentally than the deprivation of basic necessities because it leaves little space for a person to breathe'. (Stark, 2007)
Coercive control lies at the heart of domestic abuse and all the aspects of domestic abuse that become visible to others needs to be understood within this context. As agencies, family or friends, we often don't know what lies beneath what we see, but evidence tells us it is likely to be there. When we see physical harm, we need to understand that we have already missed a high proportion of the abuse which has already taken place.

We also need to understand that the majority of survivors do not experience frequent, sustained or significant acts of physical violence. We need to understand that rules, consequences and fear are consistently present.

When we think a survivor is unsure or indecisive, we need to understand the complex trauma through constant threats and manipulation, inferred or real, that she may face combined with the constant erosion of her self-worth.

"It took me 5 years after leaving my ex to understand the different types of abuse I suffered, and I hated myself for years for it. I buried myself in work for years and then I had a breakdown"

(Strategy consultation in Oct-Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

Impacts of Domestic Abuse

Being subject to domestic abuse can cause devastating impacts for survivors and their children:

- Dealing emotionally with the abuse and trauma, creates complex trauma responses that can often manifest in depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideations. More than a third (36%) of women who have experienced severe physical and sexual violence have attempted suicide.
- On average, four women are killed by their abusers each year in Birmingham. The majority of these were trying to leave or end the relationship at the time.
- Survivors of domestic abuse may turn to coping strategies such as alcohol or drugs (prescribed or illegal), in order to numb-out the abuse that they are experiencing or may be forced into dependency by their abusers. Women experiencing significant domestic abuse are more than twice as likely as others to have a dependency on alcohol and eight times more likely to have a dependency on drugs.
- By virtue of their marginalisation in society, some groups sharing protected characteristics will face additional barriers to receiving the support that they need. As a result, they can potentially face continued abuse.
- Disabled survivors experience domestic abuse for 3.3 years (compared to 2.2 years for non-disabled survivors).
- Only 9.1% of refugees in 2023 could support women with No Recourse to Public Funds, resulting in them staying in unsafe or unsuitable accommodation.
- Domestic abuse causes survivors to be isolated from their friends, family and communities, and to fear what will happen if they seek help.

The impact of domestic abuse -
Women's Aid ([womensaid.org.uk](https://www.womensaid.org.uk))

Hidden-Hurt-Full-Report.pdf
(agendaalliance.org)

Disabled people and domestic abuse spotlight - SafeLives

Evidence Hub: Annual Audit 2023 - Women's Aid ([womensaid.org.uk](https://www.womensaid.org.uk))

Some statistics are Internal Birmingham City Council data - unpublished.

National Legislation and Pilots:

- Since 2021, the **Domestic Abuse Act** has emphasised the wider context of abuse, including emotional, controlling, or coercive and economic abuse. It establishes children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right. It also establishes new statutory responsibilities, which this strategy incorporates.
- Previously, the **Adoption and Children Act 2002** (s120) extended the definition of harm to include 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another' which requires children who experience domestic abuse at home to be considered in need of help and protection from the Local Authority, as well as those that are directly injured or abused.
- Likewise, the **Care Act 2014** sets out a clear legal framework for how the Health and Social Care system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. It specifies that freedom from abuse (and neglect) is a key aspect of a person's wellbeing.
- **Controlling or coercive behaviour** was written into law under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and helps us to better understand legal the definition as set down in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022** recognises domestic abuse and sexual violence as a serious crime in its **Serious Violence Prevention Duty**. Birmingham is committed to recognising this for all survivors within the city.
- The **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022** raised the minimum age to 18 and included any conduct for the purpose of causing a child to enter into a marriage before their eighteenth birthday as an offence
- The **Online Safety Act 2023** has strengthened laws around image-based sexual abuse and made coercive control a 'priority offence' which means that tech companies are required to prevent and remove coercive content from their sites.
- It has also created new duties for Ofcom to regulate misinformation and misogyny online and to act to strengthen our communities' awareness of these issues. As part of this strategy, we will support this work to keep communities safe and change misogynistic attitudes.
- The **Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession**, updated in 2024, enables certain people who have leave to enter or remain as a partner to gain rights to access publicly funded support following domestic abuse.
- The **National Police Chiefs Council** announced in July 2024 that violence against women and girls is an epidemic in the UK, with DA remaining one of the biggest demands on policing.

- 
- The **Victims and Prisoners Act 2024** has introduced new support requirements to protect victims from further trauma, including a requirement for all police forces to participate in Operation Encompass and a new duty for local policing bodies, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to collaborate in providing victim support services and changes to public protection decisions. As action to implement this strategy progresses, this new duty will help shape our evolving action plan.
- Building on the government's **Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan** (2022), the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is currently piloting a **new Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism** to strengthen learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews.

- **Operation Encompass** is a national information sharing partnership between police forces and education authorities, in which education settings are informed of incidents of domestic abuse affecting their students, enabling them to help to safeguard children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse at home.
- The Ministry of Justice is currently piloting the **Pathfinder** scheme in family courts in several locations, including Birmingham. This project aims to enable local authorities to share important information about domestic abuse cases, sparing victims from having to retell their experiences repeatedly, and to ensure that children are listened to at every stage in the process of family justice, expressing their feelings and feeding back on what is working for them.

- The House of Commons justice select committee conducted an **inquiry into the coroners' service** in 2021, updated in 2023. In 2024, the Chair summarised its findings in a letter to the Minister for Court and Legal Services, calling for changes to coroners' services and the system under which coroners publish 'reports to prevent future deaths'.

Scale and Impact of Domestic Abuse - What do we know, the NATIONAL Picture

Domestic abuse is widespread and chronically under-reported. Whilst statistics are helpful in providing an indication of how far-reaching domestic abuse is, reports will be much lower than the levels of actual abuse experienced. We know individuals and their families may live with domestic abuse for a significant period before asking for help.

Safelives reports that on average survivors

LIVE WITH ABUSE FOR 3 YEARS



before getting help. For survivors aged over sixty, the average is 6.5 years before accessing help. Those at risk of so called 'honour-based' violence are also likely to experience abuse for longer periods.

Approximately **ONE IN FIVE** of those aged 16 and over has experienced domestic abuse since turning 16.

Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse

as non-disabled women, and typically will experience abuse for a longer period before accessing support.

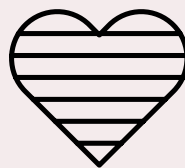


Safelives reported in **2017** that disabled survivors are twice as likely as non-disabled survivors to have planned or attempted suicide.



People with Learning Disabilities are especially vulnerable to domestic abuse and less likely to access help. Only **18%** of accommodation based services, and **25%** of community based services have specialist provision for this **group**.

Safelives estimates **LGBTQ+ people** are often under-represented in statistics and highlight that currently **2.5%** of people accessing domestic abuse services identified a LGBTQ+. They reported in **2018** that LGBTQ+ survivors are twice as likely as non-LGBTQ+ survivors to attempt suicide.



The **Crime Survey** for England and Wales for year ending March 2023 estimated that 4.4% of adults aged 16 years and over (**2.4 million people**) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. In **2022 2023**, **111,478** cases were heard at **MARACs** across the country.



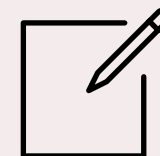
In recent years, the number of domestic abuse-related crimes have repeatedly increased.

The **Police** recorded **1,453,867** domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales in the year ending March 2023; **889,918 (61%)** of these were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes.



In the year ending **March 2023**, **45,344** people have used the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** (known as Clare's Law) to inquire about a new partner's record.

Domestic abuse cost **£78 billion** in England in 2022.

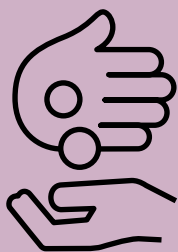


Women's Aid have calculated the social and economic costs that domestic abuse drives across the public sector, including the impact it has on people's health and the NHS.

The data in this profile come from a range of national sources, including Safe Lives, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, national policing statistics and Women's Aid. This is published data which can be freely accessed, links have been included.

Scale and Impact of Domestic Abuse - What do we know; the LOCAL Picture

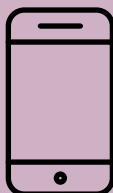
As a partnership we recognise the high level of under-reporting likely to take place across Birmingham and that people in different circumstances are impacted by domestic abuse in different ways. It is important that we work together to strengthen our collective knowledge of under-reported abuse and expand local research and intelligence to help gain a fuller picture of the issues.



Birmingham is the **third** most deprived **core city**. **90% of wards are more deprived** than the national average,

and more than **40%** of children live in **relative poverty**.

14% of women in **poverty** have faced extensive violence and abuse.



On average in 2023, the Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid helpline received **2,016** calls per month.

(Data sent by Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid)

Locally, domestic abuse crimes reported to the police in Birmingham, more than doubled from 13,664 in 2018/19 to **27,770** in 2022/23.



West Midlands Police attended **86,344** domestic incidents in 2023 (an increase of 7.4% from the previous year) and recorded **44,047** domestic abuse crimes from January 2023 to January 2024. Domestic abuse accounts for **17.5%** of total calls.

(Data sent directly by West Midlands Police)



466
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION NOTICES

were issued in 2022/23, an increase of 29.4% from 360 in 2021/22.

(Data sent directly by West Midlands Police)

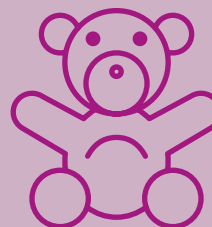
In Birmingham there were **42** Domestic Homicide Reviews from April 2011 to June 2024. Learning from these reviews continually informs actions to improve responses from agencies across the city.

A recent audit of

67
Suicides

in Birmingham found that **11** victims are known to have been subjected to abuse and **6** had perpetrated abuse.

(Data sent directly by West Midlands Police)

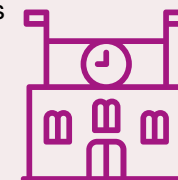


Domestic abuse is now the second highest reason for contacting **Birmingham Children's**

Trust. In 2023, the Trust received 8,829 contacts from other agencies, in which domestic abuse was the primary need. Around 60% of children referred to the Trust have not been known to them before.
(Data sent directly by Birmingham Children's Trust)

During the 2022-23 school year, **14,394** Operation Encompass notifications were sent to Birmingham schools and education settings to help safeguard children and young people who had experienced incidents of domestic abuse at home.

(Data sent directly by Birmingham Children's Trust)



Nationally, the **NSPCC** found that **1 in 5** children (under 18) has experienced domestic abuse at home. In Birmingham, 1 in 5 represents **57,493 children**. Our young city needs suitable domestic abuse support for children and young people.

170 GP practices in Birmingham refer patients to the IRIS programme. Referrals are rising, with as much as a **28%** increase in Quarter 2 of 2023 compared to 2022.

(Data sent by Health partners)

Hospitals Trusts are also seeing increases. By December the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital had **142** disclosures of domestic abuse from patients in 2023, an increase of **426%** since 2020. Staff disclosures for domestic abuse during 2022/23 also increased by 62%.

(Data sent by Health partners)

Domestic abuse was the main reason for 992 homeless presentations in 2022/23.

40% of homeless women state domestic abuse is a factor in their situation.

(Data sent by Birmingham City Council Housing partners)

At the University of Birmingham, in the 2022-23 academic year, one of the main reasons for providing students emergency accommodation was DA.

Domestic abuse was the 4th highest category of behaviour reported by students to the Report + Support disclosure service.

(Data sent by University partners)

Birmingham is a **superdiverse** city, with almost 200 different nationalities living together, and **52%** of the population are from minority communities.

Birmingham's NPRF Women's Network supported **500** women with No Recourse to Public Funds in 2023/24.

(Data sent by specialist Domestic Abuse partners)

The data in this section comes from both published sources and internal service data from members of the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership.

Intersecting Local Strategies

➤ Violence Against Women and Girls

Our Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy recognises domestic abuse as part of wider violence against women and girls, as set out in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy. This is a sister strategy to the Domestic Abuse Prevention strategy and will be finalise and implemented concurrently.

➤ Housing and homelessness

Birmingham's **Housing Strategy 2023-28**, **Temporary Accommodation Strategy** and **Homelessness Prevention Strategy** set out our plans to improve housing provision. Residents from one of our commissioned domestic abuse refuges contributed their lived experience towards the development of Birmingham's Housing Strategy.

➤ Change for Children and Young People

Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership's Change for Children and Young People 2023-28 strategy includes our shared ambition to "build safety" for children and families impacted by domestic abuse.

➤ Health and Wellbeing

Birmingham's **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** sets out our plan for reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing, including our public health approach to violence reduction, informed by behavioural science. The **Triple Zero Strategy** outlines how city is addressing all kinds of addiction in our Birmingham community, including interventions for young people presenting with addiction who have been victims of domestic abuse.

➤ Suicide Prevention

Our Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy and Suicide Prevention strategy work together to save lives by preventing suicide as a result of domestic abuse.

➤ Safeguarding

The **Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan** sets out the city's priorities for improving the safeguarding of adults, including prevention and early intervention to reduce the risk of abuse. This mirrors the commitment to early help and improved coordination of response across the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Business Improvement Plan and **Birmingham Neglect Strategy**.

➤ Community Safety

The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership **Annual Report** sets out the key priorities for community safety in the city and outlines its work on Domestic Homicide Reviews and Violence Against Women and Girls, including its support for the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership.

➤ Modern Slavery

Birmingham City Council's **Declaration of Intent** establishes its commitments to tackle Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

7. New Priorities:

Supporting Children as Victims and Holding Perpetrators to Account

In Birmingham, we welcome the Domestic Abuse Act formally recognising children who see, hear, or experience abuse as victims.

By the time they reach adulthood, more than 1 in 5 children in the city will have experienced domestic abuse at home. Domestic abuse can have a severe traumatic impact on children, including anxiety, feeling guilty for the abuse, and low self-esteem. Growing up in an abusive environment and living in a constant state of control, abuse and terror can have profound consequences for a family's well-being, far into the future.

Most survivors and their children considered to be at a medium risk will live with their abuser for around 3 years, and those considered to be at high risk for 2.3 years.

This strategy aims to meet the needs of children as survivors by:

- Increasing access to support services in the community as well as in safe accommodation.
- Ensuring there is specialist support for children and families across the pathway, from prevention and early intervention through to crisis.
- Ensuring that all services are supportive of the non-abusive parent and recognise all of the actions they take to keep their child safe.
- Supporting non-abusive parents to maintain custody of their children.
- Holding abusive parents to account. This includes recognising how perpetrators use child contact to continue abuse, use the children to monitor and report on the non-abusive parent's life, and threaten or hurt children to escalate control.
- Recognise that abusive partners cannot be good parents, due to the impact of the abuse on the children and the non-abusive parent (most often the mother).


Our consultation raised the issue of children and young people under 16 perpetrating abusive behaviours to adults, predominantly parents. Our view is that while this is an issue that needs addressing, it does not fall under the remit of this strategy and is instead a safeguarding issue and a separate, specific form of abuse, as recognised by the Home Office in recent consultation on an agreed definition

Holding perpetrators to account

When someone is violent or abusive, they are 100% responsible for their actions. Perpetrators of domestic abuse may use a number of excuses for their behaviour including:

- Growing up in an abusive household
- Drug or alcohol addiction
- Mental health support needs
- Stress

These factors are not causes of domestic abuse. Many people live with these and do not abuse their partner, ex-partner, or family members.



It is important in any work we do with survivors; we recognise that perpetrators of abusive behaviour may appear charming and blame the survivor or act as though it has been blown out of proportion.

This strategy calls on everybody to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviours and recognise that they can change but **only if they choose to**. One of the Partnership's key activities to enact this strategy is to develop guidance on this. **There is nothing that a survivor can do to change their behaviours.**

8. Discharging Our Part 4 Duty

and Learning from our Needs Assessment

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – Part 4 Duty

Part 4 The Safe Accommodation Duty places several requirements upon local authorities, including:

- Provide support for survivors and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- Appoint a multi-agency partnership board.
- Conduct and produce a Needs Assessment.
- Publish a strategy.
- Ensure sufficient provision for minoritised groups, including disabled people, older people, male survivors.
- Report back to the Government on progress.

Birmingham City Council receives a grant to discharge these duties. Our commissioned services are therefore shaped around provision for survivors and their children within safe accommodation and provision for minoritised groups.

Under regulations supporting the Act, local authorities are required to consider within their strategies:

- Violence against women and girls
- Modern slavery
- Community safety
- Victims of crime
- Housing and homelessness reduction
- Safeguarding
- Supporting families
- Changes to the need identified for accommodation-based support

Local authorities are required to review their strategies every three years, and must carry out a 10 week consultation on the draft strategy.

Our existing strategy was refreshed after our first Needs Assessment, produced by the Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council in 2021 to 2022.

We have also consulted extensively with survivors, professionals and the wider public to understand the local needs.

Our Needs Assessment tells us that:

Birmingham's current approach includes strengths-based approaches that are integrated and managed across services, thus ensuring that agencies work effectively to build on existing assets to tackle domestic abuse. Strengths include:

- Existence of sophisticated support including helplines, refuges, and provision of commissioned outreach/lead worker.
- A multi-agency partnership approach.
- A strong 'specialist sector' offering refuge, advocacy, and therapeutic services.

Recommendations made:

- A commitment to training and culture change across the system, especially within statutory services, to increase understanding of the impact of trauma on the survivor.
- Perpetrators need to be held to account by all agencies, and there needs to be a whole system responsibility for this.
- The gender-based emphasis expressed in the previous Domestic Abuse Strategy for Birmingham should remain.

- Raise awareness within the community, family, friends about the intricacies of domestic abuse and the forms it can take.
- Closer connections with grassroots organisations and investigation into barriers for specific client groups should inform commissioning activity.

To date we have:

- Continued to commission support in safe accommodation and in the community, prior to the introduction of the new Part 4 duty. This includes specialist support workers in refuge and dispersed accommodation, lead workers supporting survivors in the community and commissioning the Domestic Abuse Hub.
- With the introduction of the Part 4 duty, we enhanced this support further by funding additional children's workers, complex needs workers and therapeutic and counselling services in safe accommodation.
- We also enhanced support in the community to ensure survivors accessed support at the point of need including enhancing helpline and webchat support.
- Increased support for grassroots organisations, recognising the vital role they play in providing support to women and children in more marginalised communities, through a programme of Community Grants. These projects have included specialised support for survivors from the South Asian community, black and Chinese community and outreach events in schools and work with children who have experienced domestic abuse.
- Strengthened partnership working across the city and improved how housing, health and social care and specialist third-sector services join up to support survivors and families.

Moving forward we will:

- Continue to commission support in refuge, dispersed accommodation, and properties with Sanctuary scheme support.
- Ensure a strong pathway of support across all commissioned safe accommodation, ensuring that all providers meet the quality standards introduced by the Domestic Abuse Act.

- Ensure a strong pathway for survivors to be able to help themselves while waiting for support.
- Continue to join up local services, with joint commissioning in line with our duty to collaborate under the Victims and Prisoners Act.
- Continue to build on our communications to raise awareness of support available for all survivors, including men.

"I always thought I was the only one going through this. I would look at people's lives and think "they look happy - I wish I had what they have," but that wasn't the case. It's about finding me and loving myself, and with the help of this organisation I feel so much better. It's a long road but I am getting there, and I have peace of mind when I go home. It is now my safe place where I can close the door."

(Survivor quote from a case study of support within safe accommodation in Birmingham in 2023)

9. Key Issues in the City

Violence Against Women and Girls

Domestic abuse is part of a wider issue of violence against women and girls, caused by gender inequality in society. This strategy works in sisterhood with the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy which is also currently being developed and recognises the intersections between the types of abuse. Consultation for the VAWG strategy has shown local survivors' passion for working together to get things right for the future, and a Lived Experience Group is being established to provide ongoing input and challenge.

Poverty and cost of living

Birmingham is the third most deprived core city in the UK. 95% of women who experience domestic abuse report experiencing economic abuse and one in four women reports experiencing economic abuse after leaving the abuser. Poverty and the cost-of-living crisis do not cause domestic abuse but are used as tools by perpetrators to control. They also present additional barriers to survivors leaving and recovering.

Housing and homelessness

Homelessness is a prevalent issue for domestic abuse survivors in Birmingham:

- Domestic abuse is the third highest reason for people presenting to the Council as homeless, and the reason given for 12.36% of households in temporary accommodation.
- In 2023/24 838 households were homeless where domestic abuse was given as the primary reason.

The Domestic Abuse Act changed homelessness legislation by determining that all victims of domestic abuse would be automatically considered 'priority need' for rehousing. Survivors of domestic abuse can face multiple barriers to being rehoused such as a lack of suitable affordable housing, having to survive on one income, being the sole carer for a child or children, childcare costs, and limited employment options.

Birmingham also faces significant pressures on the housing system. This impacts upon availability of refuge accommodation and emergency dispersed accommodation, as many residents are unable to move on to longer-term housing. Many families are living in unsuitable accommodation, which makes it harder to them to recover from abuse.

This strategy therefore works in sisterhood with the Homeless Prevention strategy and recognises the intersections of these issues.

Covid-19

Services across the city worked tirelessly to ensure that support continued during the lockdowns, and pandemic. The pandemic highlighted nationally how big an issue domestic abuse is.

Locally, the result was that support and responses to domestic abuse were pushed back into crisis, rather than early intervention and prevention.

Perpetrator Management

A key part of preventing domestic abuse is holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour. Evidence has shown that perpetrator management programmes can be successful in reducing rates of reoffending. However, there are challenges around engaging perpetrators in programmes and finding resource for perpetrator programmes.

With limited resources, we believe it is right to keep the safety and recovery of survivors as our first priority. We are committed to improving how we hold perpetrators to account across the existing pathways of support and justice. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the lack of perpetrator management in our city impacts our ability to prevent domestic abuse.

Language and Translation Needs

Birmingham is a superdiverse city, with a vast range of languages spoken. A high percentage of our city's population speak a language other than English as their primary language. Those who do not speak English or are not able to confidently access services in English, are especially vulnerable to domestic abuse. Professional translation is vital to many survivors' safety, recovery, and rebuilding, but needs to be more readily available and better integrated across the support pathway.

Asylum and Migration

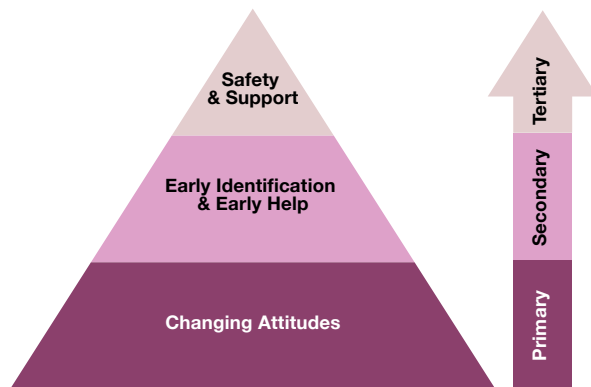
As a City of Sanctuary, Birmingham is proud to have a large population of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. However, those with uncertain immigration status or No Recourse to Public Funds face significant barriers in reporting domestic abuse and accessing support.

Policing

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary has placed West Midlands Police in a higher level of monitoring, called 'Engage'. Several of the inspectorates' concerns relate to the forces' response to domestic abuse and note the high level of demand due to the prevalence of domestic abuse in our area. West Midlands Police work closely with partners, including specialist domestic abuse providers, to support survivors, and consult survivors on how their experience can be improved.

10. Birmingham Response

“Birmingham is a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse.”



OUR VISION

Our vision is rightly ambitious, involves all citizens and cannot be achieved by a single agency in isolation. To be successful, **domestic abuse must become everyone's business.**

Our strategy sets out the city's commitment to tackling domestic abuse. Guided by the principles of the national strategy **Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (2021)**, we are focusing our approach on women and children – recognising that they are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse.

As a result, the starting point for our new strategy builds on the previous approach and moves towards pro-active prevention, identifying domestic abuse as early as possible to prevent the escalation of the abuse at every opportunity and limit its impact in the future. Underpinning the delivery of the strategy is an action plan. This will set out the detail of what we will do, who is responsible and delivery timescale and the outcome for survivors.

To do this, a very careful and considered approach must be taken to rebalance our collective efforts towards **preventing domestic abuse happening in the first place while ensuring safety and protection is available where there remains a threat of risk or harm.**

Domestic abuse is a complex issue, and the landscape changes regularly. As such, this strategy and its action plan are dynamic, and will be reviewed regularly, to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

“I really hope more support for victims will be accessible to more people. Awareness of how the perpetrator operates is important and recovery for victims, mostly women and children needs to be more readily accessible and available. Trauma training and recovery is paramount in our society now.”
(Survivor consultation, Oct 2021)

OUR PRIORITIES

We know that the issues we have highlighted need ambitious action to resolve. We have identified 6 key priorities to tackle domestic abuse:

PRIORITY 1

Whole Systems

Working together
and making domestic abuse
everybody's business.

PRIORITY 2

Prevention - Changing Attitudes and Behaviours

Prevent domestic abuse from
occurring in the first place s
relationships centre on equality
and respect.

PRIORITY 3

Early Help and Support

Intervene early to prevent
escalation and reduce harm.

PRIORITY 4

Children and Young People

Raising awareness of healthy
relationships, intervening early
to support, and protecting them
from harm of domestic abuse.

PRIORITY 5

Safety, Support and Recovery

Single pathway of quality
assured support for survivors
across Birmingham.

PRIORITY 6

Holding Perpetrators to Account

Developing a pathway of
interventions that holds
perpetrators fully accountable
for their actions.

“Survivors (including myself) want to move on from their experience, but the impact of violence and abuse can leave an enduring legacy. As a survivor what was important was the need / want for a normal life, especially for the children. Confidence and trust is possibly one of the greatest challenges.” (Strategy consultation in Oct-Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

HOW WILL WE DO THIS? STRATEGY PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Vision – “Birmingham is a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse.”

Values

Survivor-centred and survivor-led
Strengths-based approach
Perpetrator accountability

Early intervention and prevention
Intersectionality
Robust partnership response

| Priority 1 | Priority 2 | Priority 3 | Priority 4 | Priority 5 | Priority 6 |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Whole Systems Approach Making domestic abuse (DA) everybody's business. All partners working collectively and collaboratively as a network, to respond to and prevent DA. Recognising complexity and intersectionality, and the integral role each partner plays in the system. | Prevention - Changing Attitudes And Behaviours Promoting culture change, through awareness raising with the aim of challenging attitudes that foster and perpetuate DA. Understanding that perpetrators are solely responsible for the abuse they perpetrate. Ensuring the needs of marginalised survivors are highlighted. | Prevention - Early Identification And Help Focusing on early identification of the signs of abuse. Strengthening confidence and firm responses from all professionals to prevent escalation of risk and harm and provide tailored support to survivors. Embedding our specialist early help offer of DA in the universal space e.g., family hubs, GPs. | Children And Young People Are Protected Raising awareness and understanding of healthy relationships. Identifying, supporting, and, where necessary, safeguarding children and young people affected by domestic abuse, including supporting young people in abusive relationships, as well as abuse from family. | Safety, Support And Recovery Keeping survivors and their children safe is paramount concern. Commissioning quality assured support to survivors in safe accommodation as per Part 4 DA Act duty. Developing a longer term and holistic offer to aid recovery. | Hold Perpetrators To Account Develop an intervention pathway that sets out a range of actions that holds perpetrators to account, at every opportunity across the system, whilst ensuring that survivors are protected from harm. |

PRIORITY 1 – WHOLE SYSTEM

What do we mean by Whole System?

Domestic abuse can affect anyone. Those subjected to domestic abuse, predominantly women and children, interact with multiple professionals in their day-to-day lives. This network of agencies across the city creates the whole system. Each agency plays a key role in supporting survivors, and the system will work together to ensure survivors of domestic abuse and their families have access to high quality, appropriate and timely support. It will deliver a co-produced, robust, co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse across the strategic partnerships and plan effective use of resources to improve outcomes for families.

Key Actions:

- Create a good-practice toolkit, empowering the workforce to work in a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive way, that consistently puts the survivor at the centre of their work.
- Develop a consistent, systematic process for collecting and sharing domestic abuse data, insight and lessons learnt across the partnership to inform our strategic direction and action plan and cascade best practice across the whole system.
- Conduct multi-agency audits to consider the qualitative impact of progress made against the key priorities and the difference that this has made to the lives of survivors and their children.
- Share guidance around the values and principles of this strategy for partners to embed within their training programmes.
- Review with agencies the training that they are using and whether it includes a trauma-informed approach, understanding of the fundamental nature of coercive control in domestic abuse, and the use of professional curiosity to spot signs and to respond effectively and earlier, reducing the demand on crisis support.

“Making it everyone’s business is about choice.”

(Public participation session during strategy consultation, Oct – Dec 2023)

PRIORITY 2 - CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

What does it mean?

Changing attitudes means everyone understanding what a healthy relationship looks like, knowing that survivors are never to blame for the abuse, that abuse is a choice, and that abusers are accountable for their actions.

To eradicate domestic abuse, we will strengthen prevention work across the city so that survivors, family and friends, employers, and communities in Birmingham are better able to prevent, identify and respond to domestic abuse. We know that the response of the first person a survivor confides in is vital and strengthening our responses will help ensure that survivors can access support and are not subjected to further abuse.

Key Actions:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive partnership communication and marketing strategy to raise the profile and awareness of domestic abuse through different mediums: campaigns, toolkits, social media, digital media, ensuring consistent and appropriate communication messages around domestic abuse.
- Adopt culturally competent and trauma-informed responses to domestic abuse to improve our understanding of survivors and children's lived experiences and understand the support they need.
- Deliver partnership training to encourage professional curiosity in staff, recognising early signs of abuse, coercive and controlling behaviours, and how to respond sensitively so that survivors feel believed, listened to, and supported.
- Increase knowledge of domestic abuse within the community so that family, friends, and employers are able to recognise domestic abuse, including emotional abuse and coercive control, and know how to access support and advice for survivors, children, young people and perpetrators.
- Support a stronger and consistent approach to domestic abuse through education of healthy relationships in schools, colleges, universities and out of school settings, enabling more children and young people to grow up developing an understanding of what makes a healthy relationship.

Language matters and can have a devastating impact.

(Strategy consultation, Oct – Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

PRIORITY 3 - EARLY HELP AND SUPPORT: PROVIDE THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

Where it is safe to do so considering the risks and status of the survivor, working alongside them, we will share information across service providers so that services can work collaboratively with survivors and their children. We will establish clear focus on early identification of the signs of abuse and strengthen first responses from all professionals to prevent escalation of risk and harm. We will embed an early help offer around domestic abuse in universal spaces, like family hubs and health settings, building on the offer within specialist services, such as our local Domestic Abuse Hub. We know from case studies within our current support services that by providing the right support at the right time, we can prevent the escalation of abuse, save lives, avoid homelessness, improve outcomes for survivors and reduce demand on crisis services.

Key Actions:

- Review the current delivery of all support services and the pathways between them so survivors are not passed between services and don't have to keep re-telling their story.
- Pilot a multi-agency group to review standard and medium risk cases to inform development of the offer at these levels prevent escalation of abuse and enable people to live in safety.
- Equip frontline staff through training to have confidence to enquire about domestic abuse in a safe way, and to connect survivors immediately with appropriate support options.
- Equip services to respond in a culturally competent way, and provide tailored, early support to survivors from diverse backgrounds.
- Promote awareness amongst frontline staff of the support available, for survivors to stay in their own homes, surrounded by their own support networks, if it can be safe to do so. Ensure survivors are given information on all of their options, and can make their own choice.
- Encourage a survivor-led culture across the system, sitting alongside the survivor, going at their pace, and centring them in all support.

"I wish I had received support like this years ago it would have made me leave my abusive partner far sooner. I didn't know how controlling my ex was and it took a long time for me to stop blaming myself and to stop labelling myself as 'stupid'."

(Strategy consultation,
Oct – Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

PRIORITY 4 - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PROTECTED FROM THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Work as a partnership to identify and support children and young people affected by domestic abuse, including supporting young people in abusive relationships. Ensure that there is a robust education on healthy relationships embedded in all education settings including schools, colleges, special education provision, pupil referral units, youth settings and universities.

Key Actions:

- Raise awareness of the appropriate and accessible support options available for children and young people, both as victims and perpetrators of abusive behaviour.
- Develop and promote the use of direct work toolkits to all partners who work with children and young people, including schools, colleges, universities, and out of school settings, to support survivors of domestic abuse.
- Ensure that the toolkits meet the needs of children and young people from marginalised backgrounds. This includes pupils facing increased vulnerabilities such as those in Pupil Referral Units, children and young people with additional needs, those living in Temporary Accommodation and those in care.
- Promote the importance of all services being supportive of non-abusive parents and recognise all of the actions they take to keep their children safe, whilst recognising that an abusive partner cannot be a good parent and embed this in reporting for all agencies.
- Increase awareness and understanding across the system of young people perpetrating abuse in relationships and in the family home, and effective interventions to this behaviour.

“It is important that young people understand what D/A is and that it also involves coercive control, gas-lighting, manipulation, insults, putting someone down.”

(Strategy consultation, Oct – Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

“Recognise all the survivor has done to keep herself and children safe, she is the expert and is no way to blame for perpetrator’s behaviour. Recognise all actions perpetrator takes to abuse including using children to control, and continuing the abuse after the relationship has ended.”

(Strategy consultation, Oct – Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

PRIORITY 5 - SAFETY, SUPPORT AND RECOVERY

Ensure that survivors and their children are kept safe and are supported through good quality-assured specialist support, both in safe accommodation as per Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act and in community settings. Develop and embed a longer-term holistic offer to support recovery.

Key Actions:

- Commission quality-assured specialist support for survivors and their children in safe accommodation, that meets their complex needs, based on needs assessment, data insight and intelligence from the market, including the specialist domestic abuse sector, to inform our commissioning intentions.
- Increase the amount of community awareness of mechanisms such as civil orders and Sanctuary measures, available to enable survivors to stay safely in their own homes, surrounded by their own support networks, where it is safe to do so.
- Embed awareness of mental health in risk assessing and safety planning, connecting with specialist mental health support where needed, to prevent suicide as a result of domestic abuse.
- Create short guidance on the support available for survivors with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), and distribute across the system, to ensure that they receive the support they are entitled to.
- Explore a holistic pathway to support recovery following abuse, recognising survivors' wider needs such as mental health or financial support, and risk around post-separation abuse and suicide.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the long-term impacts of domestic abuse, and of the ongoing support available.

“Recovery can take years, if not a lifetime. So, it’s important help is always available for a survivor”
(Strategy consultation, Oct – Dec 2023, via Be Heard)

PRIORITY 6 – HOLD PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT

Perpetrating domestic abuse is a choice; perpetrators of abusive behaviour are not abusive to everyone in their lives but target specific people. We will develop an intervention pathway with a range of actions that hold perpetrators to account and challenge their behaviour at every opportunity across the system, without putting the burden of action on the survivor. This should span the continuum of domestic abuse responses ranging from civil injunctions to criminal convictions and offender management **This must be done alongside the survivor, prioritising her safety.**

Key Actions:

- Create guidance for professionals, including the variety of interventions available to hold perpetrators to account.
- Develop good practice for agencies working with perpetrators to manage survivor-informed safe conversations to ensure that perpetrators are appropriately challenged and supported to change their behaviour at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop good practice guidance to equip relevant professionals to recognise, where a perpetrator has children, that an abusive partner cannot be a good parent, and to not collude with perpetrators who use contact with children to continue abuse.
- Develop a shared vision, where all partners recognise the need to work more collaboratively to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour, using learning from DHRs and child and adult safeguarding practice reviews.
- Work with criminal justice to enforce breaches of civil orders where they are reported.
- Implement a communications campaign to increase awareness across the city that domestic abuse is a choice, and never the fault of the survivor. We will also highlight that domestic abuse is a serious crime, and the potential interventions that can be put in place for it.
- Review perpetrator intervention options and effectiveness and produce recommendations for Birmingham.

“I’m sure if people were more aware that there was never a reason to abuse us in the first place and that it was the abuser who was in the wrong all the time perhaps people’s views would change.”

(Survivor consultation in Oct 2021)

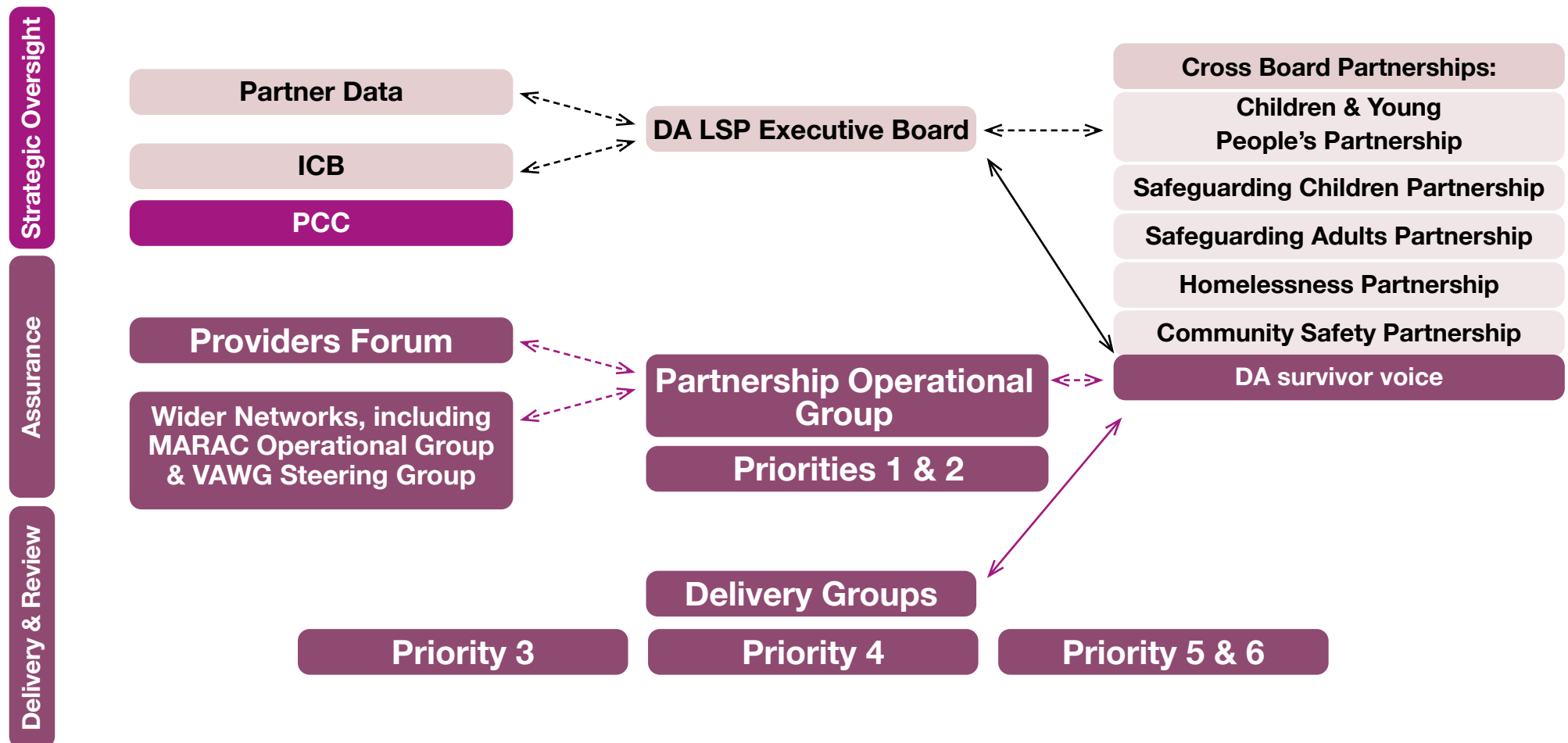
OUR OUTCOMES

| The strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes: | What this will mean to survivors | The strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes: |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Service providers and front-line staff are equipped to recognise and respond to domestic abuse. ➤ Services are better prepared to support children and young people who are victims/survivors. ➤ Information about the support available for survivors is clear, consistent, and accessible. ➤ Our city community is educated as to what domestic abuse is, and what services are available in Birmingham. ➤ Birmingham citizens feel confident and able to report incidents of domestic. ➤ Abuse is reported earlier as people are confident in raising the issue, therefore reducing opportunities for harm. ➤ Consistent processes and systems are in place to respond appropriately to domestic abuse. ➤ Survivors and their children are offered person centred support to address their specific needs. ➤ More children have good emotional health and wellbeing, resilience and understanding of healthy relationships. ➤ More survivors get support to navigate the system and move into suitable accommodation when they need to leave their home, so they are safer sooner. ➤ Perpetrators are dealt with appropriately. ➤ Repeat incidents of domestic abuse are reduced. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A survivor-centred approach - This puts the rights of each survivor at the forefront of all actions and ensures that each survivor is believed, and treated with dignity and respect. This approach promotes their recovery, reduces the risk of further harm and reinforces their agency and self-determination. ➤ Being able to trust - Importance of confidentiality promotes safety, trust, dignity, and empowerment. ➤ Feeling safe - The concept of safety includes physical safety and security as well as psychological and emotional safety. ➤ Feeling heard and respected - Every survivor has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to make choices about what happens. ➤ Feeling empowered - Self-determination means respecting the dignity, wishes and choices of survivors, and allowing them to be in control of the helping process by deciding who to tell and what action to take. ➤ Not feeling discriminated against - All people have an equal right to the best possible assistance without unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, race, ethnicity or tribe, colour, language, religious or political beliefs, status or social class, etc. ➤ No Wrong Door - Right support at the right time and not being passed to a number of agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse. ➤ Greater confidence in giving information and advice. ➤ Improved knowledge of the domestic abuse offence. ➤ Providing the right support at the right time for the survivor and children. ➤ Better understanding of pathways resulting in timely access to support. ➤ Able to navigate around the virtual offence. ➤ Improved understanding of the early intervention and prevention offence. ➤ A confident and capable workforce. |

11. Governance and Accountability

The Domestic Abuse (DA) Local Strategic Partnership Board's role is to provide strategic oversight and assurance of delivery of the city's Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy, including its statutory duty, and to coordinate domestic abuse work across other executive boards with a smaller executive board with key representatives.

DA LSP Governance Structure



12. Joint Action Plan

A Joint Action Plan has been developed by all the partners in Birmingham's Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership, in order to deliver the outcomes agreed in this strategy.

For each of our six priorities, the Joint Action Plan sets out what we will do, both as individual agencies and across the whole system, who is responsible, what the delivery timescale is and what the outcome will be for survivors.

It is a living document, which will be overseen by the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board and updated as we make progress.

13. List of Support Agencies

We know that domestic abuse affects anyone. If you would like to speak to someone, please see support below.

We know that domestic abuse affects anyone. If you would like to speak to someone, please see support below.

Call 999 or go to your **local police station** for immediate help if you or someone else is in danger or a crime is in progress.

Call 101 for non-emergency advice from the police.

Support in Birmingham for women:

- **Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid**
Helpline 0808 800 0028 open every day 9:15am - 5:15pm, or ask for drop-in details, or use Webchat is open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm, and more information is available at <https://bswaid.org/>
- **Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)**
0121 440 1443
open Mon - Fri, 9:30am to 5:00pm
- **Roshni (Forced Marriage & Honour Based Abuse)**
0800 953 9777
open Mon - Fri, 9:30am - 4:30pm

For men

- **Trident Reach**
Helpline 0800 111 4223
open Mon - Fri, 9:00am – 5:00pm or visit <https://tridentgroup.org.uk/care-support/domestic-abuse-services>

For LGBT+ people:

- **Birmingham LGBT's**
Helpline 0121 643 0821
open Mon - Fri, 10:00am - 9:00pm
and Sat 11:30am to 7:00pm or visit <https://blgbt.org/services/support-services/domestic-violence/>

For concerns for children:

- Visit <https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk/working-with-children/safeguarding-concerns>

For help with housing:

- **Birmingham Housing Solutions**
Helpline 0121 272 8905 or email bhmhousingolutions@cranstoun.org.uk

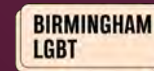
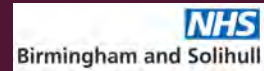
Helplines:

- **RSVP (Rape and Sexual Violence Project)**
0121 233 3818 / 0121 200 1695
- **Childline** 0800 1111
open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- **Relate** 0121 643 1638
- **Birmingham Crisis Centre**
0121 507 0707 (24 hours)

National support agencies:

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**
0808 2000 247 (24 hours)
- **Respect Men's Advice Line**
0808 8010327
- **National Centre for Domestic Abuse**
0800 970 2070
- **Victim Support**
0300 303 1977

For further options and details visit the **Birmingham City Council Domestic Abuse webpages**.



Birmingham Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership