

Domestic Abuse Strategy

2020 - 2022



It is time to **STOP** the silence

This Strategy has been developed by St Helens Council and will be delivered in partnership as a whole borough approach to tackling domestic abuse.

A grayscale photograph of a human hand, palm facing forward, with fingers spread. A purple rectangular sticker with the word "STOP" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters is affixed to the center of the palm. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light gray.

STOP

I am proud to present this new Domestic Abuse Strategy to you on behalf of St Helens Council.

This Strategy, whilst led by the Council, has been developed in partnership with agencies across the sectors, to ensure that it provides a framework for co-ordinated action to tackle domestic abuse in our area.

In October 2019, I held a Summit in St Helens to begin a borough-wide conversation about the challenge of domestic abuse in our area. For too long this is an issue that has been hidden – shame and secrecy have sometimes prevented us from talking about and confronting abuse – a crime that can happen to anyone – regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status or financial circumstances.

As a society, we recognise the harm that domestic abuse can have, not only on the victim, but on children, family members and the wider community. For many people, the legacy of abuse can last throughout their lifetime.

I am proud of the strength of our communities and we are fortunate to have such dedicated local service providers who are passionate about the support they provide. But, in order to change, we need to acknowledge that domestic abuse is taking place in all our neighbourhoods and it is the responsibility of us all to end the tolerance that has allowed this behaviour to continue.

This Strategy is an important step in delivering this change – setting out how we can work together from early years through to support for older people. This is a blueprint, an action plan, a collective list of what we pledge to do – the real change will be delivered in how we work together to support victims, safeguard children and break the silence.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document – I hope that you will join me in delivering the change that we need to make St Helens a safer place – to enable all our residents to live their lives free from abuse.



Cllr Jeanie Bell
Cabinet Member
Community Safety

Our Aims

Domestic abuse is a complex and challenging issue - No one organisation can respond alone to domestic abuse – that is why the collective partnership of agencies across St Helens will work together to tackle this issue that has for too long harmed our residents and our community. St Helens Council has led the development of this document and whilst this is a Council Strategy, it has been developed as a whole borough approach towards tackling domestic abuse.

In recognition of the prevalence of this issue and the impact on our communities, domestic abuse is one of the three priorities of the People's Board for 2019-2022.

Responses from agencies in order to be effective, need to be person centred, holistic and responsive to changing needs as well as collaborative. Whilst this is a Partnership Strategy, our aim is to reach out further than the existing partnerships – it aims to engage our residents and communities to join together to speak out against Domestic abuse.

The Strategy recognises that St Helens consists of strong, resilient communities who have pride in their local identity and heritage. However, there are also challenges that communities must face together to maintain safe and strong communities - tackling the current perceptions and local culture that enables the levels of domestic Abuse to continue and grow is one of those challenges. Addressing attitudes, tackling myths and speaking out against abuse are not easy actions for a community to take, but the current levels of domestic abuse and the impact on the lives of so many of our families mean that it is time for us all to work together to reset and reinforce expectations regarding relationships, strengthen the support available and raise the profile of this issue. We must also support the victims of domestic abuse to no longer feel shame and to remove the barriers – real and perceived - that prevent victims from seeking support.

This Strategy has the overarching aim to end the silence of domestic abuse but also outlines the commitment from the partnership for the following actions:

- Working together with our local communities on campaigns to raise awareness and eliminate tolerance of domestic abuse in St Helens
- Co-ordination of our activity to support victims and challenge and deter perpetrators
- Ensuring that services work together to protect children from the ongoing harm and trauma of domestic abuse
- Providing Community leadership in addressing and confronting the cultural aspects of domestic abuse
- Moving our services from reactive to proactive to work to support prevention rather than managing crises.
- Listening to survivor's stories and ensuring that they influence our future approach
- Training our teams and promoting the professional responsibility to report domestic abuse
- Developing support for a whole family approach to domestic abuse – taking an 'asset based approach' to the community
- Using every opportunity or contact with residents to make every contact count.
- Improve our recording and data collection so that we understand the true scale and prevalence of this issue – which we can then use to improve services.

At the time of developing this Strategy, we await further confirmation on the progress of the proposed domestic abuse Bill. We will ensure that the implications of the Bill will be taken into account in the Annual Review of this Strategy during 2020.

What is domestic abuse?

The current cross Departmental Government definition of domestic abuse is:

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

The Government has recently announced its intentions to bring forward a new domestic abuse Bill, included in which will be - for the first time - a cross-government statutory definition of domestic abuse. Government have indicated that this new definition will recognise economic abuse and controlling and manipulative behaviour.

As a Partnership, we recognise that there are different types of domestic abuse.

All relationships should be free of domestic abuse. We know that domestic abuse can occur across society regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or marital status.

It is important that this Strategy recognises the different forms of abuse that can occur:

- Situational Couple Violence

Violence that occurs because a couple has conflict which turns into arguments that can escalate into emotional and physical violence.

- Coercive Control

A pattern of violent coercive control in which one partner uses a variety of violent and non-violent tactics to try to take complete control over their partner.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed or independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

- Elder Abuse

This is defined as a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

- Child to Parent Abuse

This has been defined as any harmful act by a teenage child intended to gain power and control over a parent. The abuse can be physical, psychological, or financial. (Cottrell 2003) however there is currently no legal definition.

- Honour Based Abuse

So called Honour-based abuse is defined as a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or the community. It is a collection of practices used to control behaviour and includes Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.

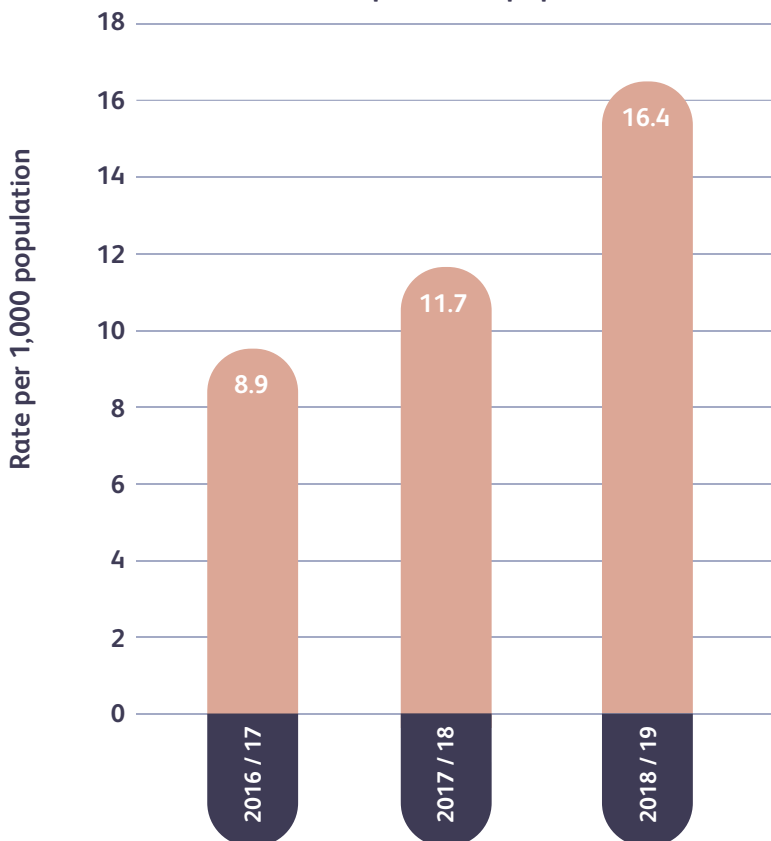
As a Partnership, we will support innovative and evidence based practice in tackling domestic abuse and will work together to confront this issue and co-ordinate the support that we provide for victims.

Language and terminology

Throughout this document the term 'victim' has been used. It is important to state that there may be preferences from people with lived experience to use the term 'survivor' –this Strategy recognises the right of people to determine the terms that they feel appropriate to explain their experiences, however for consistency of approach, this Strategy uses the term 'victim'.

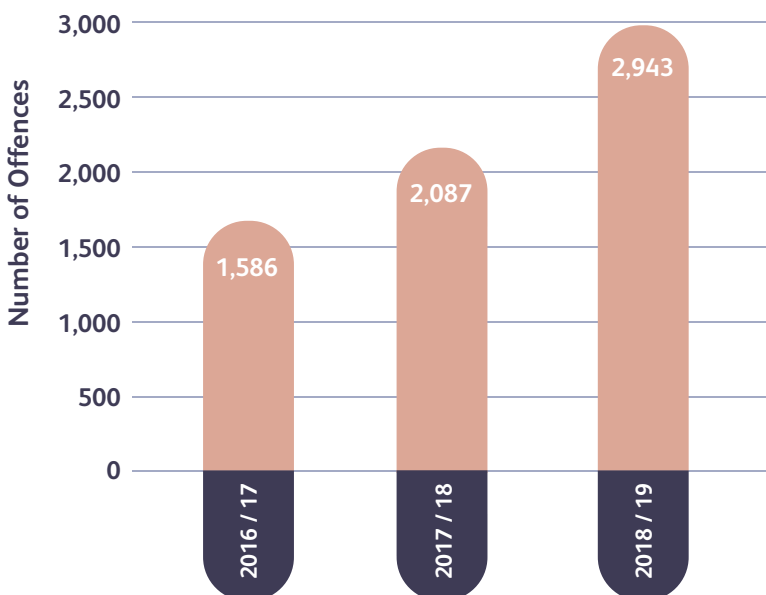
What do we know about domestic abuse in St Helens?

Domestic Abuse rate in St Helens per 1,000 population



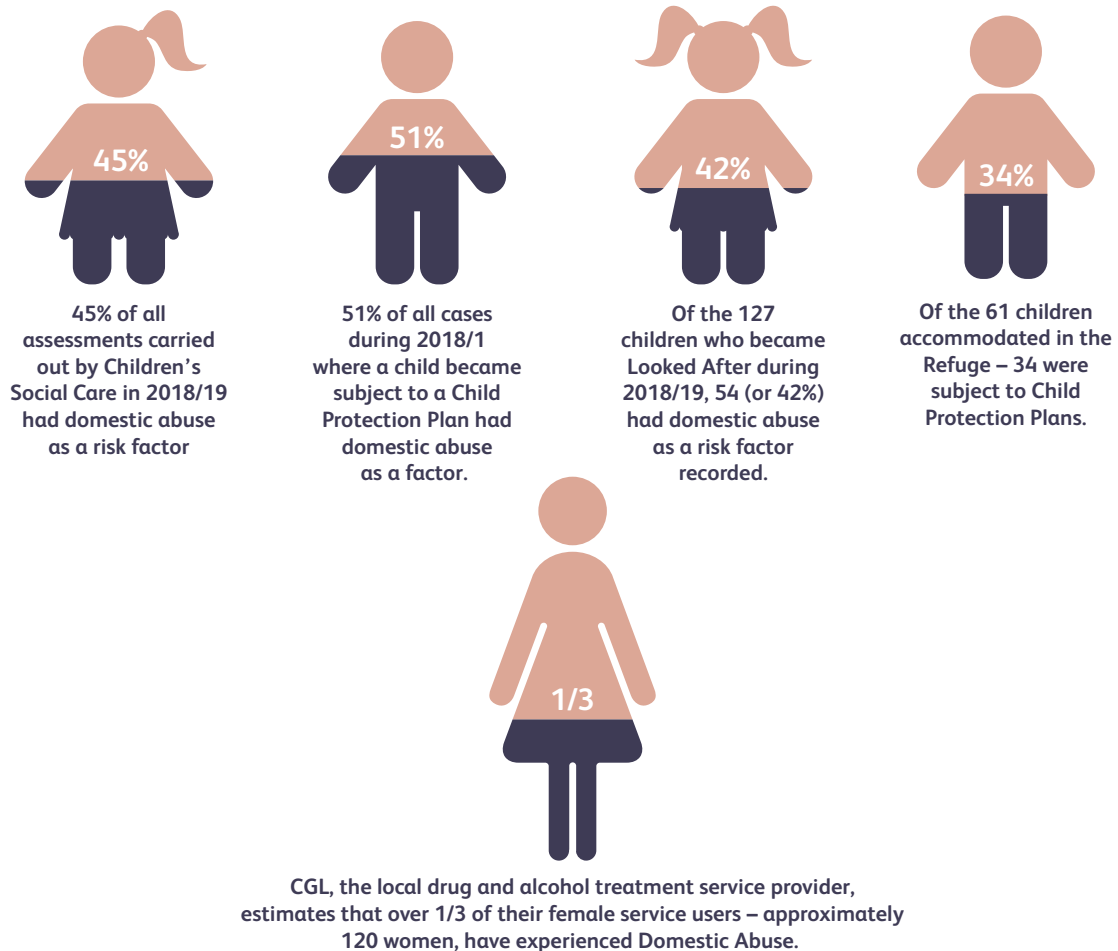
There has been a significant rise in the rate of domestic abuse in St Helens - it has almost doubled since 2016/17

Domestic Abuse rate in St Helens since 2016/17



As a % of all crimes recorded in St Helens, domestic abuse accounts for 18.4% of all crimes recorded in 2018/19 – a significant rise from 2016/17 when it accounted for 11.7% of all recorded crimes.

- Domestic abuse is the leading reason for contacts to Children’s Social Care
- Merseyside Police recorded 247 incidents of Adolescent to Parent Violence & Abuse in St Helens in 6 months from April – November 2019 – this is more than the whole year 18/19 (190 incidents)



- From April 2019, in a six-month period, the IDVA has received 541 referrals – including 29 male victims and 27 referrals including female perpetrators
- Since April 2019, in a six-month period, 57 adults (including 4 males) and 61 children have been accommodated in the Refuge.
- In the 6 months between April –November 2019, Merseyside Police recorded 2246 incidents of domestic abuse in St Helens

Data from the St Helens Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

April to October 2019 indicates:

- 421 cases were heard at MARAC, of which 46% were repeat cases
- 119 of these cases involved Coercive Control – 28% of all cases in this period
- 770 children were part of the households reviewed
- 24 cases involved the factor of pregnancy
- 224 cases involved alcohol as a factor (53%) and 148 (35%) involved drugs
- 372 cases (88%) had mental health as a recorded factor
- 48 cases (11%) had disability as a recorded factor

Our Strengths

There is a strong and established network of support for victims of domestic abuse in St Helens.

This includes the provision of an established and well managed Refuge providing emergency access and a place of safety including out of borough when required, an IDVA support service (providing trained advisers to offer specialist and emotional support, including support to attend Court when required) and an active third sector, including organisations such as the Chrysalis Centre. Specific programmes are also available through the DART programme (Domestic Abuse Recovering Together) for families who have experienced domestic abuse and the Gateway programme (for victims of abuse – formerly the Freedom programme). There is also a dedicated Family Support Worker embedded in the Refuge Service to provide direct support to children and families.

Torus, the Provider of the Refuge and IDVA service have recently commenced the process to attain DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation – this demonstrates their commitment to this area and also their willingness to improve service delivery.

There is a strong commitment from all agencies within St Helens, with partners who want to make a positive difference.

The proposed Domestic Abuse Bill will impose a Statutory Duty on Local Authorities from 2021 to provide accommodation support for victims of domestic abuse. St Helens Council has protected and prioritised the funding of a Refuge for over a decade and will continue to do so, despite the challenging financial context. In addition, St Helens Council and its Registered Provider partners prioritise people moving on from Refuge accommodation into safe, longer term housing.

Despite this strong baseline of support, gaps in provision remain and this Strategy sets out our ambitions to address these gaps, to commission services in a more co-ordinated approach and to campaign for further funding and resources from Government to continue to support victims and families.

Our Challenges

Changing community perceptions

As a Partnership, we will:

- Develop a range of co-ordinated awareness campaigns to challenge existing perceptions regarding domestic abuse
- Develop a specific campaign regarding Coercive Control to raise awareness that domestic abuse is not solely physical abuse
- Develop bespoke materials and awareness training for non – statutory and local organisations to use to support campaigns (e.g., hairdressers, beauty salons)
- Work with the Licencing section to deliver awareness raising to taxi drivers and the wider ‘night time economy
- Work with local and national organisations to challenge perceptions of ‘victim blaming’
- Work with Community Leaders (e.g. Elected Members, Faith Leaders) to identify opportunities for key messages to be delivered
- Provide support for local organisations / community responses in relation to domestic abuse
- Develop support and guidance for families who have concerns regarding domestic abuse



The evidence within this Strategy clearly sets out that tackling domestic abuse is a challenge for St Helens.

In order to deliver change, there is a need for genuine engagement with communities to tackle the myths, perceptions and culture that has long allowed domestic abuse to go unchallenged. St Helens is not unique in this challenge, but the scale of the issue in the borough tells us that current approaches are not making the impact that is required. Organisations across the partnership have undertaken specific campaigns on domestic abuse and many of these have had a positive impact on raising awareness. However, our ambition is to go further than raise awareness and tackle harmful perceptions regarding Domestic abuse through the delivery of consistent, clear and collective messages. We will do this by a co-ordinated campaign of activity, with both the Council and the People's Board providing strategic oversight of this campaign.

One of the biggest barriers relates to the expectations being placed on the victim to remove themselves from the abuse – 'why can't they just leave?'. There is only one person responsible for the domestic abuse and that is the perpetrator, however for many people there is the assumption that the abuse will end if the victim ends the relationship or physically moves away. Our understanding has grown of the impact of domestic abuse and the devastating legacy it can have on the health and wellbeing of victims, especially in relation to coercive control. We know through data that the average length of time that abuse continues is 3 years and it is a reoccurring crime. In order to tackle these assumptions and improve public understanding, we will work with both local and national organisations to learn from their experience and to implement local campaigns. We will seek advice on challenging practice and assumptions made by professionals in this area too by delivering training and awareness sessions for staff.

There is a need to develop a 'Zero Tolerance' approach to domestic abuse. We know that early intervention is vital to stop the scale of abuse and prevent escalation. We will work collectively to deliver a campaign with impactful messages regarding zero tolerance and will use social media to encourage debate and discussion on this area. A Communications Strategy will be developed across the partnership which will include advice and support for friends and neighbours who have concerns as well as challenging assumptions and re-enforcing messages about how to access support.

Community led approaches are an important part of the Services available and it is important that we engage in dialogue with our residents to understand the views within our communities and ensure that future direction is informed by this information. The partnership will support local services by engagement events, exploring opportunities for joint training and inclusion in service planning. We understand that responses from within the community are effective in challenging local perceptions and delivering tailored services to residents and these will be supported by the Partnership via practical support, advice and guidance.

In implementing a 'what works' approach, the partnership will consider how we can reach out with key messages regarding domestic abuse in non-traditional venues and to people with whom customers may confide in. We will engage services such as beauty salons, hairdressers, barbers and local pubs in a campaign that will inform such services how to respond to disclosure and how to signpost to services. We will encourage these businesses to display campaign materials and information. We will review how the 'night-time economy' such as local taxi drivers and buses can work with us on similar campaigns and look to mirror the success of the training on CE / CSE that has been provided to local taxi drivers and will work with the Licensing Division of the Council to explore this issue.

One of the key aims of this Strategy is to address any local attitudes and cultures that exist which result in a 'tolerance' of domestic abuse – in doing this, we will look to our Community Leaders to reinforce messages to the community. Victims of abuse may seek support from Faith Leaders or seek advice from other Community Leaders such as Elected Members or MP's and enabling good quality advice and assistance is an important response.



We understand that the experiences of victims are important and will ensure that they inform future service development. Current barriers identified by victims include feeling ‘judged’ by relatives, neighbours, the community and professionals. In addition to this, fear of consequence is another factor – especially in relation to children, where the over-riding concern is often that children will be removed from their care. Ensuring that victims receive suitable first responses from agencies is vital – as poor experiences can deter victims from future disclosure. Agencies will work to dispel myths and ensure that pathways into service are reviewed to minimise and reduce barriers. Engaging ‘trusted professionals’ within the wider support network (e.g. Outreach Workers, Engagement Workers) across the borough to respond to disclosure will ensure that the partnership works together to offer consistent advice and guidance upon first disclosure and encourages victims and the wider community to speak out against abuse.

Domestic abuse can have an impact across the family network and, in some cases, can result in wider family members experiencing threats of violence and intimidation from perpetrators. Families may be aware of the abuse taking place and not know how to safely respond. Agencies will work together to develop guidance and information for families and will work with wider families who have experienced the impact of abuse to understand how to best meet these needs.

Domestic abuse can happen to people regardless of age, gender, disability.



Safeguarding Children

The overall aim of the partnership is for children to 'Start Well' in life – however, with higher than average rates of reported domestic abuse in St Helens, we know that a significant number of our children will be exposed to domestic abuse during their childhood. Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on the lives of children.

For some children, the impact of domestic abuse begins before birth with pregnancy being one of the highest risk times for abuse to commence. Experiencing domestic abuse in utero and during childhood, it can leave a legacy throughout life. These experiences can be commonly referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) which can have a significant impact on outcomes for children and their physical and emotional health. The research undertaken on ACE's highlights that domestic abuse is a core Adverse Childhood Experience and that, if not mitigated by protective factors, these traumatic events can have long term impact on the health and wellbeing of children and impact on their health outcomes as adults. As a partnership, we will continue to develop our understanding of adverse experiences in childhood and how we can work to prevent occurrence and promote resilience in children and adults who have experienced ACE's as a child.

Domestic abuse presents a significant challenge for Children's Social Care. The greatest number of Police referrals to Children's Social Care relate to domestic abuse -the scale of these notifications presents a challenge for the Department, especially within the context of growing contacts and referrals overall. It is important that the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub works well with its partner agencies so that thresholds for service are understood and that the children who are urgently in need of support are progressed quickly to the Social Work teams.

During 2018, St Helens Council worked in partnership with SafeLives as part of the One Front Door project. The recent Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services noted the current response to domestic abuse at the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) stating:

"The response to domestic abuse and neglect is improving. Both are a significant feature of children's lives in St Helens, and services are increasingly coordinated to respond to the range of needs that children present" (Ofsted 2019)



Domestic abuse is a feature in 51 % of all child protection cases in St Helens. In response to this, further training for all Social Workers will be developed by the Principal Social Worker, ensuring that this frontline workforce receives up to date training on issues such as coercive control and on holding perpetrators to account, this should help strengthen the approach to assessment and intervention for children and families in St Helens. As a wider partnership, we will also ensure that there is interagency awareness of roles and responsibilities within and external to Children's Social Care and a greater emphasis on collaborative working to support children and families. Training on domestic abuse, including the MERIT and MARAC processes, is now mandatory for all Children's Social Workers in St Helens.

Schools

The Children's Commissioner for England recently reported that over 830,000 children are living in a family where there is domestic abuse – recognising that in a typical class of 30 children, 2 children will be living in a household where domestic abuse is present.

We recognise that school is often the key place for children to seek help and therefore we will work with our schools to ensure that staff are trained on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and how to support children who disclose that abuse is occurring at home. This Strategy also recognises that there is a gap in support for pre-school age children and as a partnership we will explore how other areas are providing support to younger children. Further work will also be required with daycare providers to ensure that staff are trained on how to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.

From 2020 our schools will be required to deliver Relationships & Sex Education as part of the curriculum and this presents an opportunity to rethink the scheme of work being developed in relation to Healthy Relationships. It is an opportunity for schools to deliver consistent and age appropriate messages to children regarding relationships and to set expectations regarding acceptable behaviour in relationships. In order to ensure consistency of practice, all schools in the borough will be contacted to offer support in reviewing learning materials on this area and to engage with the network of agencies within the borough to support this programme.

St Helens Schools have engaged well over recent years in the implementation of Operation Encompass, in which schools receive notification from Merseyside Police of any domestic abuse related incidents that have occurred overnight. This enables school to be aware of this and to act responsively. However, it is recognised that feedback from schools on this issue is variable regarding the interventions being delivered and there is now a need to refine the process to ensure that the responses from schools are consistent and their impact is measured. Therefore, within the first year of the Strategy we will review the current arrangements in partnership with our schools to build upon the success of this initiative.

For many children, the repercussions of domestic abuse result in major changes to their lives – often moving home and school in order for their parent to stay safe. Such incidents can have a disruptive impact on a child and as a partnership we need to improve the 'wrap around' support that we provide to children. For example, we will improve our systems and processes for when children enter Refuge to ensure that there is minimum disruption to schooling. We will continue to support the designated Family Support Worker who is located within the Refuge and will look to learn from best practice across the Network of Refuges in how we can support children.

As a partnership, we will review the support we provide to the victims of domestic abuse not just in relation to practical and emotional support to keep safe, but also to recognise that the abuse may have had an impact on the victim's ability to parent effectively. We will recognise that the abuse experienced may have had an impact on the parent's emotional and mental wellbeing to the extent that their parenting may become compromised. As a partnership, we will work to support parents who have been the victims of domestic abuse by providing support to enable them to parent safely, however the welfare of children will remain paramount in every case and in cases where it is not safe for children to remain, appropriate responses will be taken. We recognise that 'fear' of the involvement of Children's Social Care acts as a barrier for parents seeking help and support and we will learn from best practice in this area on how to reassure victims of domestic abuse that support is available.

During 2020, Children’s Social Care will also explore new models of support for families who have experienced domestic abuse. Models such as the ‘Safe and Together’ framework will be considered for local implementation to ensure that the Department is learning from best practice and adopting approaches that improve outcomes for children and families.

As a partnership we will improve how we listen to children who have experienced domestic abuse. We recognise that the experience of a child differs from that of their parent who has been the victim of abuse and it is important that future services are commissioned by being informed by the views of children. Access to age appropriate therapeutic services is an important part of supporting children to recover – currently St Helens offers the DART scheme and Listening Ear. Whilst these services offer important support to children, our goal is to widen the offer of support to children with the aim of developing a spectrum of services – from therapeutic support to counselling to school based services. We will work with children who have experienced domestic abuse to understand their needs and this will inform our future commissioning priorities.

“Dad hit and shout at mum. She used to cry and try to stop him but she got pushed away and she got hurt as a result. When the DV got worse she used to go to Nan’s house as she was frightened and upset”

“I remember the violence, it was mainly at night I just kinda got used to it”

Voices of Children who have been supported by the DART programme.

Some children who have witnessed domestic abuse may require more intensive support – as with victims of domestic abuse, there may also be an impact on longer term mental health. We will review our current pathways in relation to Child & Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) to ensure that the impact of domestic abuse and trauma informs the support delivered.

St Helens has a good track record of collaborative working in developing projects to respond to local issues – two current projects that will indirectly support this Strategy are the Reducing Parental Conflict programme and the Building Bridges initiative (funded by the Department of Health and Department of Work and Pensions). The Reducing Parental Conflict programme aims to support addressing the issue of worklessness and the Building Bridges programme will provide support to children living with alcohol dependent parents, offering support through tailored programmes to provide stay safe initiatives and wider work on reducing conflict and building healthier relationships. Both are important preventative services and demonstrate the commitment in this borough to joint working to improve outcomes for children and families.



As a Partnership, we will:

- Work with all schools in the borough to ensure that Healthy Relationships within the new RSE curriculum includes key messages regarding domestic abuse
- Engage with Children's Social Care to share understanding of existing processes regarding Child Protection and explore ways to strengthen co-ordinated responses to perpetrators
- Support Children's Social Care and the partnership in development of new models of family support
- Support the partnership to provide co-ordinated early help responses
- Assist Children's Social Care and the partnership in ensuring that appropriate and timely referrals for service are made across the partnership
- Review expectations in relation to Operation Encompass to ensure that schools remain fully engaged in the process
- Ensure that all partners are responsive to requests to minimise impact on children who reside in Refuge or temporary accommodation (e.g. access to schools)
- Work as a partnership to explore the needs to commission therapeutic support for children who have experienced domestic abuse
- Ensure that support is available for pre-school age children and that providers of early years services are recognising and responding to this issue
- Ensure that agencies are providing help to families at the earliest opportunities – to prevent escalation and provide support via agreed pathways
- Ensure that the voice of the children who have lived experience of domestic abuse influences future policy direction of all organisations
- Ensure that all Social Workers practising in St Helens have access to good quality local resources and up to date research in relation to domestic abuse

Child to Parent Abuse

"If it was a partner – like man and wife, you could walk away, you would tell them you're not having it, but when its family, you can't. There were many times when I told him I would ring the police to get him out, but he knew I wouldn't do it, as he was my son and I was embarrassed".

The area of Child to Parent abuse is under-reported both nationally and within St Helens. As a partnership we need to understand the prevalence of this issue so that we can understand the needs of both parents and children where abuse is occurring.

Child to Parent abuse can include physical abuse, emotional abuse and also financial abuse – the manifestation of these behaviours over a period of time becomes a pattern of abuse. Feelings of shame or fear of repercussions from statutory agencies such as the Police and Social Care are often barriers to reporting.

It is important that we understand the reasons why children are responding with violence to parents and carers. Traditionally this would have been considered as a child safeguarding issue, perhaps overlooking the risks to the parents and carers. As a greater understanding of this issue develops, factors such as the responses of children experiencing trauma and who may have witnessed abuse and the prevalence of the issue for Parents / Carers of children who have mental health needs or disabilities will need to be considered in responses to this issue.

St Helens has high levels of Children in Need and Children who are in the Care of the Local Authority and family breakdown is a key factor in many cases – whilst no specific collation of data is available on the issue of Child to Parent Abuse, it may be a factor in some of the cases which have resulted in children becoming looked after. Across the Partnership, we will look to review our recording of this issue so that we understand the needs within our local community and will work together to develop a support pathway for both parents and children. There is an opportunity to align this work with the development of the Edge of Care service within Children’s Services, which includes the implementation of a Family Group Conference approach and short term respite where required.

It is important to recognise that Child to Parent Abuse can continue into adulthood or even commence in adult relationships with parents or wider family members. It is important that as a Partnership we understand the scale of adult child to parent abuse also and the factors that may influence this behaviour in adults, such as substance misuse and financial abuse, so that we can work together to address this issue.

As a Partnership, we will:

- Ensure all agencies reporting mechanisms can capture reports of Child to Parent Abuse (CPA) to evidence scale of prevalence in St Helens
- Raise awareness through partnership forums of the issue of CPA
- Engage with national charities and support groups to develop local responses to CPA
- Ensure that the agencies who work with families where there are risk factors for CPA have trained their staff to identify and support
- Ensure that CPA is identified within the Edge of Care service being developed by Children’s Social Care

Older People & Domestic Abuse

It is widely recognised that domestic abuse is under-reported by Older People – generational barriers, isolation, lack of support networks and financial dependence are all factors that can influence the rate of disclosure and requests for assistance from older people. The impact of domestic abuse on older victims is similar to that of younger people, however increasing frailty and dependence for meeting care needs are also additional factors to the vulnerability of older people. For some older people, abuse may have continued for significant periods of time.

It is important that these additional factors are recognised and that older people are not disadvantaged, with appropriate responses from agencies taking into consideration the needs of this group.

Older people often have higher levels of contact with health services and it is important that health professionals who care for older people are trained in recognising the signs of domestic abuse and how to respond to disclosures. This will be reflected in the training strategy to ensure that services respond in an appropriate and personal way.



There is a need to recognise the complex relationship between domestic abuse and Dementia, particularly within previously caring relationships and the support necessary for both victim and perpetrator. Capacity is an important consideration within these discussions as is the legal framework that defines any interventions. Discussions with family member are important in providing appropriate advice and support. There is a need to ensure that local services are responding to safeguard both the person living with the condition and their carers.

St Helens has a good provision of places of safety, including the Refuge, however we know from our data that older people are less likely to access this resource. We understand that the demographics of the client group are younger and can have additional needs that can impact on this environment. Respite provision may be considered for older people with care needs who are experiencing domestic abuse. However, there is a need to diversify our offer for older people who have experienced abuse so that this barrier is removed.

In order to ensure that Older People who are victims of domestic abuse are supported, the Partnership will engage in a campaign of specific awareness raising and ensure that wider networks are engaged in this, for example seeking the support of housing and care providers to display information in sheltered settings and extra care schemes and to engage with partner agencies to ensure information is available at spaces and locations specifically for older people, such as the Dementia Café. We will work with our partners in the Community and Voluntary Sector to ensure that all agencies are aware of this issue and have appropriate responses in place. The Adult Safeguarding Training strategy is currently under review and will include bespoke sessions for vulnerable groups including those older adults who live in extra care housing. We will work closely with safeguarding partners to ensure that appropriate information is shared during this training.

Vulnerable Adults and Domestic Abuse

It is important that the wider partnership recognises the scope of the role of Adult Social Care in responding to domestic abuse. Further awareness raising is required to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the definition of 'vulnerable' persons across the partnership as well as thresholds for intervention. Training on domestic abuse, including the MERIT and MARAC processes will become mandatory for all Adult Social Workers and Assessment & Review Officers from 2020 onwards.

The safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 apply to an adult who:

“Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and; is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and; As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect”

Local authorities must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect an adult who meets the criteria at paragraph 14.2 (above) is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected.”

Adult Social Care also receive notifications from Merseyside Police in relation to potential safeguarding issues. The Service will develop a response based on the principles of the early help services to provide advice and support for people who do not have care needs, but may require some early support and advice to prevent escalation of abuse.

Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse has been defined as:

‘A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person’.

This form of abuse does not necessarily involve an intimate relationship, but is perpetrated by Carers, sometimes within the wider family network as inter-generational violence and exploitation. As such, Elder Abuse may also be considered within the wider current national definition of domestic abuse.

Understanding the scale of this issue at a local level, as with other forms of abuse, is a challenge. There is the additional factor of fear and dependence on Carers that often prevents disclosure in these circumstances. Raising public awareness on this issue is an important action.

Public perception may be that elder abuse only occurs in settings such as Residential Care or Nursing Homes and does not recognise that abuse can happen in the family home.

Whilst as a partnership we need to recognise the issue of Carer Stress and the need for support for Carers, there is an over-riding need to ensure that this does not minimise the recognition of the impact of harm on the victim of Abuse. In such areas, practitioners from Adult Safeguarding will lead on responses to both the victim and the Carer.

As a Partnership, we will:

- Develop a targeted awareness campaign specifically recognising domestic abuse for older people
- Promote a greater understanding of the role of Adult Safeguarding and responsibilities to Vulnerable Adults
- Review of cases that have been presented to MARAC where the victim is aged over 65 and ensure findings are reported to Safeguarding Adults Board
- Review existing hospital discharge planning arrangements to ensure that risk of domestic abuse is fully considered when planning discharge
- Engage local third sector organisations on the issue of domestic abuse and develop shared actions
- Strengthen the housing support offer for older people who have experienced domestic abuse who do not wish to access Refuge.
- Recognise differences between domestic abuse and Elder Abuse and ensure staff are trained on both areas



Meeting the needs of Specific Groups

There is still a widely held view that domestic abuse involves female victims and male perpetrators – domestic abuse remains a predominantly gendered crime, however there is a need to recognise that abuse can occur in all relationships and that males can also be victims of abuse. Two of the five victims of Domestic Homicides since 2014 in St Helens are men and it is important that men are encouraged to seek support if they are experiencing abuse. As such, the partnership will ensure that all services consider the needs of male victims of domestic abuse and will reflect this issue in future campaigns to tackle the issues of stigma and shame that prevent disclosure.

This Strategy aims to be inclusive to offer support to all victims of domestic abuse – regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or marital status and as such there is a need to ensure that the actions planned by the partnership recognise the need for specific support for people from all communities.

In relation to the LGBT+ community – there is a need to recognise the additional factors that may prevent disclosure of abuse. GALOP identified that there are some unique factors to the experiences of people who are LGBT+ - for example, a perpetrator may make threats of disclosure of sexual identity to family and friends. As a partnership we will recognise these additional experiences and ensure staff training is reflective of the experiences and barriers faced by of all of our residents. We will work to ensure all structural barriers that prevent access to services are removed and we will establish links with local specialist LGBT+ services to strengthen partnership working.

The Gypsy / Traveller communities are one of the largest minority groups within St Helens. Data on the prevalence of domestic abuse within this community is rare but community groups and organisations recognise that this remains a significant under-reported issue within the communities, which still retain traditional views of the role of women within the community. Cultural barriers to reporting include fear of being ostracised from the community, a lack of knowledge regarding local infrastructures and access to services. St Helens has a dedicated Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer who works alongside the communities to offer support and advice on accessing local services and is a key contact in raising awareness as a trusted professional.

There is an emerging need in relation to victims of domestic abuse who have No Recourse to Public Funds – a status of people who are subject to immigration control with no entitlement to welfare benefits or housing and no right to work. For people with this status, accessing support services is a considerable challenge as until their status is resolved with the Home Office, there is no funding available for Refuge or other places of safety. For victims with children, often Children’s Social Care will provide initial emergency support but for victims without children, there is no automatic right to any assistance, despite potential destitution and a significant risk of harm. Evidence from our Refuge service indicates that this is a growing issue in the borough – with 5 cases in 2019. People in this circumstance are highly vulnerable and potentially isolated – without family or support networks and unable to receive funding to access vital service. As a partnership, we will respond to this emerging issue by agreeing a pathway together – with the underlying principle that no victim of domestic abuse should be refused a safe place because of their immigration status.

So called Honour Based Violence (HBV) is a form of domestic abuse. As a partnership, we will ensure that our teams are trained to recognise this issue and to provide the specialist support required. Whilst the number of reported cases of HBV are low within St Helens, our services will be supported to ensure that people at risk of HBV receive targeted responses. We will also ensure that HBV is recognised in our future campaigns to raise community awareness of this issue.

As a Partnership, we will:

- **Agree a shared approach towards the responsibility for the safety of people with No Recourse to Public Funds who are experiencing domestic abuse**
- **Ensure that Agencies working with the Gypsy / Traveller community in St Helens provide support to enable the community to be aware of the support available if required**
- **Work with local LGBT+ groups to raise confidence in reporting domestic abuse and understand current barriers that exist in doing so**
- **Ensure that any awareness campaigns are inclusive of LGBT+ communities and that all literature produced recognises that domestic abuse can occur in all relationships**
- **Highlight awareness across the partnership of the issue of Honour Based Violence**

Perpetrators

Despite domestic abuse being a crime most perpetrators are invisible to services.

This Strategy aims to make perpetrators more visible so that they understand that their behaviour will not be tolerated – as a Partnership we will:

- **Hold perpetrators to account for their actions**
- **Offer support to those perpetrators who seek help to change**
- **Target serial perpetrators to disrupt their pattern of behaviour**

In developing this Strategy, a common theme in the feedback from the partnership was the current lack of provision for perpetrators who recognise that their behaviour is unacceptable and seek help to change. The partnership recognises this current gap in provision and will work together to commission a service for perpetrators who are not involved in the Criminal Justice System to enable both self-referrals and referrals from professionals – adopting an early intervention approach. The commissioning of this service will be informed by best practice and will be evaluated for its effectiveness after an initial 12-month period. We will ensure that the needs of female perpetrators are also considered in this commission.

To strengthen the response from the partnership and to ensure that perpetrators do not remain invisible to services, a Perpetrator Pathway will be developed by agencies – with the dual purpose of signposting to advice and support but also to ensure that agencies are working together to deter perpetrators, especially serial perpetrators who move into new relationships and repeat the same patterns of abusive behaviour.

This Strategy also recognises whilst the need for accountability within the criminal justice system is essential - there is also a need to work with perpetrators who have recognised their behaviour, shown remorse and engaged with programmes of support on rehabilitation. Given the nature of this type of offending, engagement with perpetrators needs to be managed sensitively and by experienced professionals within the partnership. Opportunities to engage with perpetrators who have themselves experienced programmes of support is an important element of understanding why abuse occurs and the measures that can be taken to end abusive relationships.

Evidence highlights that abusers can be most violent when their victim tries to end the relationship or seeks help, therefore there is a need to ensure robust safety planning for victims to ensure that there is protection during this time for victims and that responses from the criminal justice agencies are timely and robust.

Throughout the development of this Strategy, the issue of serial perpetrators was raised as a concern by most agencies – with agencies reporting on the devastating impact that this can have for children and families as one individual perpetuates a repeat cycle of abuse with multiple victims. As a partnership, we will agree a joint approach to identifying, tracking and disrupting the activity of serial perpetrators – learning from best practice and developing a local approach that challenges this behaviour and ensures that there are consequences for those involved in this behaviour.

As a Partnership, we will:

- **Develop a set of agreed pathways across the partnership in response to Perpetrators**
- **Develop and deliver a local perpetrator programme that accepts self-referrals from those not involved in the criminal justice system based on good practice model**
- **Enhance existing systems between partner agencies to recognise and deter serial perpetrators of domestic abuse**
- **Improve and analysis the MARAC data on perpetrators to inform future service responses**
- **Undertake further promotion of Claire’s Law by all partner agencies**
- **Work with Probation Services to evaluate the impact of the existing Perpetrator programme and use findings to inform wider service planning**

Recognising and responding to Coercive Control

In the most recent six-month period, 28 % of cases heard at the MARAC involved coercive control.

Controlling or coercive behaviour was criminalised in 2015 when it was written into law under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. Despite this change in the legislation, public perceptions regarding domestic abuse remain focused on physical abuse. As a Partnership and within our communities, we need to move thinking away from domestic abuse equating to physical violence to recognising patterns of behaviour. This includes ensuring that our workforce is trained to recognise coercive and controlling behaviour and providing awareness raising campaigns for the public on this specific issue.

Over recent years, the use of technology as a means of coercive control has grown. Government, in its consultation on the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill, has recognised that there is more to do to target technology-related abuse. Perpetrators can use technology to continue the abuse after the relationship has ended and this needs to be challenged. As a partnership, we can respond to this issue across our work-streams - from our relationship with schools and the teaching that children receive regarding Online Safety to ensuring that practitioners respond to this method of control and coercion and have the skills required to address this aspect of abuse.

Accessing Justice & Recovery

As a partnership, we will support victims to access appropriate criminal and civil sanctions. The IDVA Service in the borough has expanded in the previous year to provide additional capacity to meet demand and is a vital service in supporting victims to access justice.

Despite the high levels of reported incidents of domestic abuse, there is a low conversion of reporting to prosecutions. There are a number of factors that can influence a victim's decisions to progress a complaint of domestic abuse. However, domestic abuse is a crime, it is important that the appropriate legal action is taken – we will work as a partnership to explore and support initiatives that promote the progression of legal justice for victims as well as exploring with the criminal justice sector how prosecutions can also be progressed independently of the support of victims where appropriate.

Since 2014, the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (known also as 'Claire's Law') has been available - this ensures that potential partners can access information on the history of their new partner to enable them to have full disclosure of any previous behaviour, convictions and risks in relation to domestic abuse. Information from the IDVA service indicates that this provision is being used locally, however there is a need for wider promotion within the community so that people can access this important tool independently to inform their future decisions regarding relationships. As a partnership, we will raise awareness regarding Claire's Law in our campaign activity.

For many victims of domestic abuse, separation provides the cessation of the relationship and the abuse. However, for some victims, separation can also be a time of high risk. Whilst professionals often focus on the physical separation from the perpetrator, recent evidence indicates that this is a point at which risks can escalate. Therefore, as a Partnership, we will support victims who seek to leave abusive relationships and ensure that safety planning is robust, including working to remove obstacles that exist.

As a partnership, we need to improve our approach to longer term support for the victims and families as part of the recovery from abuse. Agencies highlighted the issue of financial hardship as a barrier to recovery during the development of this Strategy – including this being a reason why victims may return to perpetrators. We will work together to explore how better support and signposting to services (including Legal advice) can be delivered across the Partnership.

From January 2020, the Gateway programme will replace the Freedom programme – the new programme will include greater involvement from other agencies, including Safe2Speak and the Department of Work and Pensions. The new programme has been developed by reviewing approaches in other areas and to ensure that the programme is contextual, modern and enables females to attend by removing barriers (including the provision of childcare if required during the programme).

As a Partnership, we will:

- **Work with victims to understand existing and perceived barriers to progress with criminal cases**
- **Ensure Safety Planning by agencies is robust and timely for when victims leave perpetrators**
- **Explore current barriers in relation to longer term support for victims, including financial barriers and develop appropriate responses as a partnership**
- **Support professional to better consider the impact of technology in relation to domestic abuse**
- **Support the development of Peer Support Networks and recognise the importance of lived experience in understanding longer term needs**

Health Impact of Domestic Abuse

There is a growing awareness of the need to consider domestic abuse as a public health issue due to the scale of this issue and the impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities. As a public health, issue we need to focus on the prevention of domestic abuse.

Health Services are often the first point of contact for victims of domestic abuse and therefore there is a need for staff to be trained and responsive to both recognising the signs of domestic abuse and how to respond to disclosure. This includes all staff from Pharmacy Assistants to A&E practitioners. As a partnership that includes both health commissioners (CCG) and health providers, we will work together to ensure that the response from all of our health services is robust.

A key part of the response from health will be better engagement with GP practices on this issue of domestic abuse. As the frontline of health provision and as trusted professionals, it is vital that local GP practices provide awareness training to their staff and have a domestic abuse Pathway regarding enquiry and responses to disclosure.

Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on both the immediate and short term health needs for victims but also in relation to long term conditions also:

As well as short term injuries, victims of abuse suffer long-term physical health consequences. Health conditions associated with abuse include: asthma, bladder and kidney infections, cardiovascular disease, fibromyalgia, chronic pain syndromes, central nervous system disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, migraines/headaches

Domestic abuse often leaves victims with reproductive consequences too, including gynaecological disorders, sexually transmitted infections, pre-term difficulties and pregnancy difficulties

Source: Safe Lives

As well as the physical health implications outlined above, there are significant mental health impacts for survivors of abuse – with high reporting rates of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Evidence commissioned by Government in 2018 estimated that the annual cost of domestic abuse in relation to physical and emotional harm is £47 billion – with the emotional harm aspect accounting for the considerable majority of these costs.

Ensuring good and timely access to mental health support is a priority for the Partnership. Over the lifetime of this Strategy we will review existing Pathways of mental health support for victims of domestic abuse to ensure that they are meeting the needs of people who have experienced abuse.

For people who are living with drug and alcohol issues and are experiencing domestic abuse, the substance abuse can add an additional dependency and a further barrier to ending the relationship and the abuse. Victims may be reliant on the abusive partner to provide access to substances and in some cases creating and maintaining dependency may be a method of coercive control by the perpetrator. Victims may use drugs and alcohol as a coping strategy, which can compound existing difficulties in seeking help. The local service provider, CGL – Change Grow Live – has developed service responses to support service users who are experiencing domestic abuse and as trusted professionals, can often be the first organisation to whom a victim will disclose abuse. Early referral into this service is a key part of prevention activity and partner agencies will be requested to ensure that services are making timely referrals for support – this includes ensuring that new residents to the area are supported to access services for continuity of care and support. This Strategy will link with wider public health activity regarding drug and alcohol misuse – evidence shows that whilst alcohol does not cause domestic abuse, where domestic abuse exists, alcohol is often present.

As a Partnership, we will:

- **Support GP practices to recognise domestic abuse and improve reporting via agreed mechanisms**
- **Work with midwifery and public health nurses to strengthen routine enquiry and response to victims and their children**
- **Ensure that existing mental health pathways recognise the impact of domestic abuse and provide appropriate levels of support, including responses to trauma and PTSD for survivors**
- **Advance opportunities for organisational learning regarding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma informed practices**
- **Engagement of health services specifically used by older people to ensure awareness and responses are equivalent to other areas of healthcare (e.g. maternity)**
- **Support the local Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service provider to develop interventions and support for victims of abuse and to ensure that this issue is central in their service planning.**

Working Together

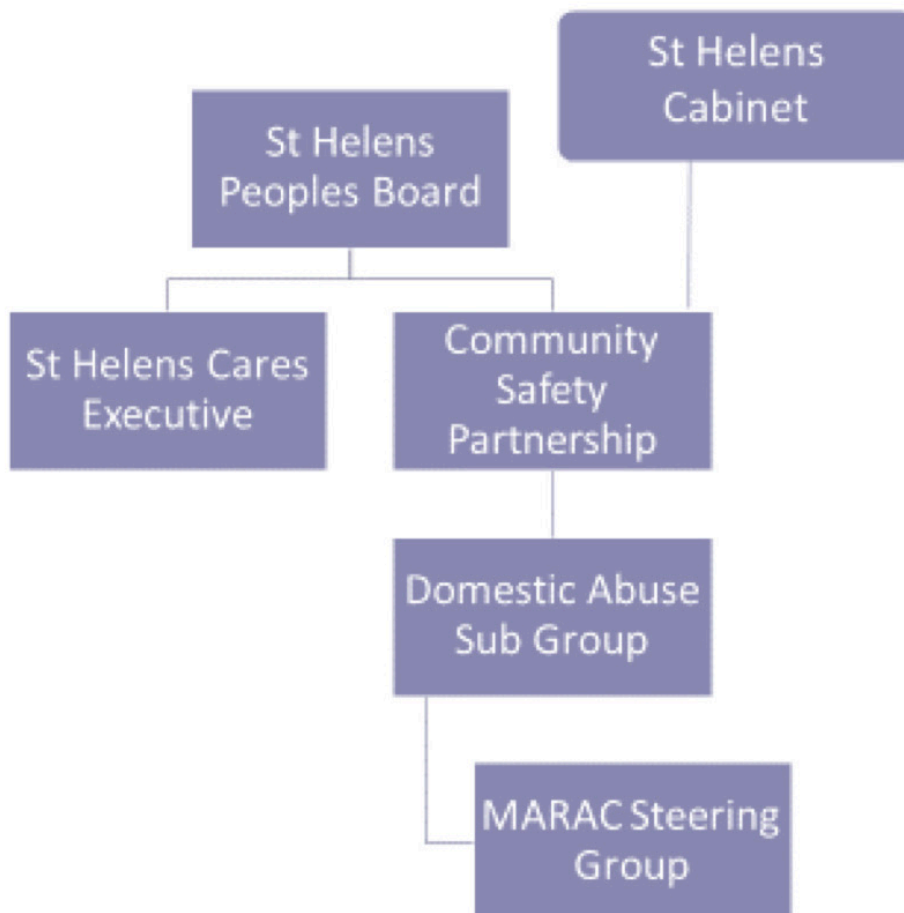
At the beginning of this Strategy we set out our objectives as a partnership. The Action Plan that will guide the delivery of these objectives contains actions that are owned across the Partnership and for delivery, we will be accountable to each other and to the People's Board.

Training is a core action in order to transform our approach. There is an opportunity for the partnership to build upon the current work ongoing in relation to joint training on Neglect – this has involved partner agencies such as the SCP, CGL and NW Boroughs working collaboratively to develop and deliver training on Neglect. Our aim is to mirror this approach in developing a comprehensive training programme across the Partnership. This training will also address the variations in agency approaches and objectives in responding to victims and families experiencing domestic abuse, with the aim of strengthening collaboration and reducing agency 'silo' working. We will develop an Online Handbook of services and pathways for professionals, offering an initial place for access to information and contacts.

As a Partnership we will review our use of technology and how we can improve this to communicate more with our residents. Across our partnership, the use of Social Media is growing and our collective coverage across the borough and beyond is significant - we will harness our current profile to promote preventative activity, challenge the perceptions of domestic abuse and signpost to victims.

Governance

This Strategy has been developed by St Helens Council. All partners will be accountable to both the People's Board as well as own individual governance for the delivery of the actions in this Strategy. The diagram below sets out how the governance for domestic abuse will operate in St Helens:



During 2018 SafeLives delivered an Audit of the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process – the main findings of this were that key documents now required updating and that the IDVA service required additional capacity to meet growing needs- in response to this, work has been undertaken to increase administrative capacity to the MARAC and a further IDVA post was agreed in 2019. A new Chair has now taken responsibility for the operation of the MARAC's across Merseyside and will bring a consistent approach to the process, as well as the ability to challenge partner agencies and hold to account for the delivery of actions. During 2020, the partnership will organise a Peer Review of the MARAC to further understand what works well and what we can improve. To support this process, the domestic abuse Sub Group will, twice a year, undertake a multi-agency audit of cases that have been managed through the MARAC process and report findings to the People's Board.

During 2019/20, the findings of two Domestic Homicide Reviews are due to be published – this follows a further three DHR's over recent years. Action Plans will follow from the recommendations, however it is important that the learning from each of these reviews is cascaded across all agencies – not just statutory partners - and that it directly influences practice and learning. It is also important that as a partnership, we learn from any future Local Learning Reviews in relation to Children and Safeguarding Adult Reviews where domestic abuse has been a factor. Whilst the People's Board will retain strategic oversight of these Reviews, the Domestic Abuse Sub Group will lead on the dissemination of the learning from these reviews and will ensure other relevant forums such as the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board are engaged in this process.

As a Partnership, we are employers of many local residents in St Helens – some of whom will experience domestic abuse in their time as our employees and colleagues. As responsible employers, we should be supportive to staff experiencing domestic abuse – this includes the potential to implement a Workplace Scheme in which there is a clear Policy position outlining the support available for employees as well as workplace 'champions' who are trained to offer support to colleagues. We will as individual organisations consider how our own organisations can respond.

There is a strong history of collaborative working between agencies in St Helens – from organisational partnerships such as St Helens Cares to working together on shared campaigns. As such, there is an opportunity to engage partners who may not be involved in front line service delivery to victims of domestic abuse, but who can use their ability to engage with residents to support campaigns and deliver messages – for example, the MRFS can often engage with residents who may not wish to contact other statutory partners. Often barriers to disclosure from victims or families exist due to fear of involvement of statutory services such as Police or Children's Social Care. Engaging with the wider partnership may offer an alternative route to disclosure. Opportunities for information campaigns highlighting the supportive nature of the work of statutory agencies may also assist in removing barriers.

As Professionals within the partnership, we need to improve our responses to domestic abuse – support cannot be solely signposting and any cultures of 'passing off' victims to other agencies without proper referral will be challenged. We will aim to move towards a shared process where it is not the responsibility of one agency to 'takeover' the situation, but to build a strong response for the victim.

At a national level, campaigns have taken place to challenge some of the reporting of domestic abuse incidents in the media. In response to this, new Media Reporting Standards have been developed. As a Partnership, we will monitor how this issue is reported in St Helens and will challenge any local reports that fail to respect these standards. We aim to maintain positive relationships with the Media – they are an important source of information for local residents - but we will support the national campaign on this issue.

As a Partnership, we will:

- Develop a Sub Group of the People's Board specifically dedicated to domestic abuse
- Undertake a Peer Review of the MARAC process in St Helens
- Implement a bi-annual audit of a sample of MARAC cases by the membership of the domestic abuse Sub Group
- Ask all partners to implement a domestic abuse Workplace Scheme
- Ensure that learning is shared across the partnership in relation to Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Ensure that learning is shared across the partnership in relation to Serious Case Reviews, Local Learning Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews where domestic abuse has been a factor
- Create a culture of partnership in response to domestic abuse with clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and opportunities for mutual support and collaboration
- Introduce co-ordinated commissioning arrangements for new and existing support services for domestic abuse
- Include awareness raising of domestic abuse within workplace inductions for all partners
- Develop peer support for professionals in responding to domestic abuse
- Complete a training audit to ensure that all staff groups receive up to date training on domestic abuse

Funding

This Strategy has been developed within the current challenging context of financial restraint across the public sector. The Strategy in itself does not offer new funding but sets out how, as a Partnership, we will use the funding available in a more co-ordinated and targeted way. Despite the significant reductions to budgets over recent years, existing services have been protected. Whilst this is positive, the growing demand for services and continued financial challenges will require us to work ever closer to ensure that the funding available is meeting local needs.

We will respond to opportunities for specific funding and initiatives as a partnership and also support each other in campaigning for future resources from initiatives and programmes so that we can sustain the services we currently provide and meet the needs identified.

Future investment in frontline services is vital in both preventing abuse and in protecting victims and families.

Finally, here are some Case Studies that demonstrate the work of our partnership and the difference that can be made...

Mary is a 68-year-old woman who had been married to the perpetrator of abuse for 34 years, living in an area outside of St Helens. Mary's daughter, Lisa, who has a learning disability, also lived at home.

Lisa was pregnant and went into hospital to have her baby. At hospital, Mary and Lisa alerted staff to the domestic abuse they were both suffering. They all stayed in the hospital until Refuge was found for Mary - Lisa and the baby stayed with a Foster Carer to support Lisa in getting skills to look after her child.

The family had been isolated and had been suffering domestic abuse from the perpetrator for over 30 years. It was only at the time of going into hospital that they spoke to staff about the abuse they had experienced.

Following discussion at the MARAC, staff at the Refuge explained the support available to Mary and reassured her that Lisa would be able to visit her. Once in the Refuge, Mary was given emergency food and toiletries. A Personal Safety Plan was completed to highlight measures needed to keep her safe. Mary was assisted to claim Pension Credit.

Mary was very happy residing at the Refuge but missed living with Lisa as they had never been separated. Through staff liaising with Lisa's Social Worker, a different Refuge was found so that the family could be accommodated together. With priority to move on from the new Refuge, they will be supported to find a long term home together.

Joan is a Female Aged 82 who has lived at the same address for almost 50 years. Joan's husband died in 2006 and she lived alone. Joan's adult son James asked if he could stay with her following a relationship breakdown. After a few years of James staying for periods of time, he told Joan that he was staying there permanently.

A few years ago, in order to pay for some essential repairs, Joan released equity from the property. James became very angry about this, saying that she had sold his inheritance. James became verbally abusive to Joan and when she asked him to leave, he refused to do so. James requested that she should gift the property to him and Joan did this following his coercion.

Once James had ownership of the property, he banned Joan from having family or friends visit the property and continued to shout and scream at her. Joan was spending most of her time in her bedroom, feeling ashamed and embarrassed.

Joan approached the Council for advice and then Citizen's Advice supported Joan to speak to the domestic abuse services at Torus. The team supported Joan to meet with the Outreach Worker, who assisted Joan in securing a new home away from the abuse that she was experiencing. Joan was distressed as she did not want to leave the home that she has lived in for so many years. Joan has now been supported to seek legal advice regarding her property and is receiving emotional and practical support from local services. Joan has now re-established relationships with family members.

David is 30 years old and was referred to the HELP programme by Children's Social Care due to concerns about domestic abuse by both parents.

When he first attended the group he was blaming his ex partner. He came to recognise a number of ways he had contributed to problems in the relationship and been abusive to his partner and as such developed greater insight and responsibility. Social Care were concerned by his cannabis use but he was resentful of this as he couldn't see a connection between this and domestic abuse and believed it to be 'not a big deal'. HELP highlighted his compromising his child's future over 'not a big deal' and this spurred him to change and desist from cannabis use. The programme returned him to a core principle of HELP – that the kind of father he is, links directly to his attitudes and behaviours towards his child's mother. He has taken this on board and feedback from professionals indicate that he has maintained a reasonable attitude towards his ex partner and been appropriately supportive. David has made several important changes – new accommodation, he is drug free and has trained and is working as a volunteer mentor for Probation Services.

Mrs A presented at a Children's Centre after an incident of domestic abuse by her husband. The local authority arranged for her and the children to go into a local Refuge and she was seen by a Troubled Families' Employment Adviser who supported her to complete a claim to Income Support – the claim was refused by DWP as she failed the necessary residency test. The Employment Adviser referred A to MRANG (Now Refugee Support) who supported her to make a claim through the Home Office to obtain the right to reside in her own right. The Local Authority put in a plan to support the family financially until benefits and housing could be confirmed. Mrs A was supported to claim Tax Credits for her children (they had British passports so were entitled to claim this). She was also supported to claim Housing Benefits and on the Appeal to a Tribunal.

After time in the Refuge, the Council arranged for the family to move into a private rented house. They continued to support her whilst waiting for the Home Office application and benefits to be confirmed. Eventually, the claim was approved and A was able to access financial support.

The Troubled Families Employment adviser began to support A in moving closer to work – support in completing a CV, attending Jobs Fairs, financial advice. A obtained a contract with a job agency for care work. Funding was also given to her to buy some clothes to attend interview and to start work - after a few months of working with the agency she obtained a permanent job in a care home. A is now attending college full time and she is hoping this will lead better job prospects in the future that fit in with childcare.

Amber* is a 35 year old woman who has two children. Both children were removed from her care due to substance use and as a result of Amber being in three abusive relationships. Amber experienced emotional, financial, physical and sexual abuse during the relationships. Amber described the last relationship as being the worst. Amber's partner was also using substances and would use substances (cocaine and alcohol) as a further means to control Amber. After the children were removed Amber's cocaine and alcohol use increased to daily as did the abuse she was experiencing. Amber was physically abused daily, called names and despite not living with the perpetrator she was also stopped from leaving the house. All of the money Amber had coming in had to be given straight to her partner. Her partner would also force her to borrow money and steal from friends and family to fund his substance use. Amber reported the final straw being that she was not allowed to leave the house for contact with her children.

Amber informed her Recovery Coordinator at CGL during a one to one what had been happening to her. The domestic abuse lead was asked to come into the one to one. Amber was provided with an overview of the options available to her including support to access a refuge, a MARAC referral, safety planning and information about local domestic abuse support. Amber chose to return home to her property with a safety plan. Checks were put into place including providing Amber with the out of hours number, and having daily contact under the guidance of monitoring her substance use. Amber was invited to attend the domestic abuse group weekly under the pretence that she was attending a women's groups as part of a plan to get her into detox.

After the group Amber was supported to contact the police and make a disclosure about the abuse she had experienced - the police attended CGL to take a statement, Amber was supported to disclose the information to her children's social worker and a referral was made to MARAC for additional support.

Amber ended the relationship 12 months ago and is now 12 months sober. She continued to engage in the domestic abuse program at CGL and worked to understand her addiction and the impact of the abuse she experienced on her and her children. Amber was successful in getting the children back in her care.

Domestic Abuse Strategy - Action Plan

Governance

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Undertake a Peer Review of the MARAC process in St Helens	To test that our current processes are robust and fit for purpose and to learn from good practice	Learning from outcomes of the review	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By December 2020	The review will be completed by an external partner and the findings shared with the People’s Board
Develop a Sub Group of the People’s Board specifically dedicated to domestic abuse	To provide dedicated strategic oversight of domestic abuse in St Helens	Ownership of the Strategy and monitoring of the Action Plan	Director of Public Health	By March 2020	The Sub Group will be established and will meet quarterly to review progress
Implement a bi-annual audit of a sample of MARAC cases by the membership of the DA Sub Group	To enable strategic leads to undertake a quality assurance exercise on practice and gain insight into operational cases	Understanding of the quality of multi-agency responses and impact of interventions	Chair of DA Sub Group	Commencement from April 2020	Evidence of cases audited and outcomes / findings reported to People’s Board
All partners to implement a Domestic Abuse Workplace Scheme	To ensure that employees who are experiencing domestic abuse are supported	Greater levels of support for our employees	Lead Officers for the People’s Board	By December 2020	Evidence of organisations signing up to a Scheme
Ensure that learning is shared across the partnership in relation to Domestic Homicide Reviews	There are currently two Domestic Homicide Reviews underway – dissemination of learning is an important part of the DHR process	Learning from findings and acting upon any recommendations made by the Independent Reviewer	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By June 2020	Evidence of learning events, information cascaded to services, Action Plans developed and delivered

Ensure that learning is shared across the partnership in relation to Serious Case Reviews, Local Learning Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews where domestic abuse has been a factor	As above, it is important that there is organisational learning from all formal reviews where domestic abuse has been a factor in harm being caused to a child or vulnerable adult	Learning from findings and acting upon any recommendations made by the Independent Reviewer	Chair, Safeguarding Children Board	As reviews are published throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Evidence of learning events, information cascaded to services, Action Plans developed and delivered
Create a culture of partnership in response to domestic abuse with clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and opportunities for mutual support and collaboration	Ensuring that the partnership challenges organisational assumptions regarding each organisations responses to domestic abuse	Key messages regarding collaboration and support from senior leaders and good working knowledge of organisational responsibilities towards domestic abuse	Lead Officers at People's Board	By December 2020	Evidence of support and challenge where appropriate
Introduce co-ordinated commissioning arrangements for new and existing support services for domestic abuse	Preventing duplication of services and ensuring that wider partnership perspectives inform commissioning priorities	Ability to meet needs through co-ordinated commissioning and to enable gaps in service provision to be considered.	Assistant Director – Community Safety	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Domestic abuse Sub Group to maintain oversight of existing contractual and future commissioning arrangements
Include awareness raising of domestic abuse within workplace inductions for all partners	Induction is an important process to set out professional expectations on staff to report domestic abuse and also to make aware of support available if required	Increased staff awareness and confidence to report domestic abuse	Lead Officers at People's Board	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Evidence of partners amending their Induction processes to include domestic abuse.
Complete a training audit to ensure that all staff groups receive up to date training on domestic abuse	Training is an important aspect of preventative activity and in ensuring a skilled workforce	Workforces across the partnership who can identify and respond appropriately to domestic abuse	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By December 2020	Training Audit completed with recommendations agreed for identified training needs

Awareness & Culture

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Develop a range of co-ordinated awareness campaigns supported by People's Board members to challenge existing perceptions regarding domestic abuse	Ensure that there are consistent messages rather than ad-hoc individual campaigns. Enable dissemination of messages across each Partner's network to gain maximum exposure and more impact	Consistent, memorable and impactful campaigns that demonstrate shared approach towards domestic abuse	St Helens Council via the People's Board led by the Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Aim for first campaigns during 2020 and an agreed schedule of campaigns after this.	Evidence of campaign materials and scope and range of areas covered. Feedback from partners and community regarding impact.
36 Include in the above approach a specific campaign regarding Coercive Control to raise awareness that domestic abuse is not solely physical abuse	Recognition that public awareness needs to be raised in identifying signs of coercive control and understanding impact on victims	As above, key messages to be delivered across the partnership	As above	As above	Greater public awareness of coercive control. Increased reporting in the borough.
Develop bespoke materials and awareness training for non – statutory organisations to use to support campaigns (e.g., hairdressers, beauty salons)	Recognition that disclosure of domestic abuse can be made to non-statutory organisations. Opportunity to engage with sectors to raise awareness, offer training and provide materials as part of wider campaign.	Widening the network of agencies who can and will respond to support victims of domestic abuse and assist in raising recognition and reporting.	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Co-ordination with specific advertising campaign in early 2020	Evidence of levels of engagement from sectors

Work with Licencing section to deliver awareness raising to taxi drivers and wider night time economy	<p>Ensure that taxi drivers receive awareness training on domestic abuse to enable safe responses to passengers</p> <p>Raise awareness within the wider night time economy of this issue</p>	Similar training on CSE / CE is mandatory for local taxi drivers	Licensing Manager, St Helens Council	By Summer 2020	domestic abuse included in training schedule for taxi drivers in St Helens
Secure a partnership with national organisation to challenge perceptions of 'victim blaming' in the area	Explore opportunities to engage with a national lead to work on issues of culture and perception in the borough and to learn from best practice	Delivery of best practice in the borough to tackle assumptions made	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By October 2020	Partnership engaged and agreed actions developed
Work with Community Leaders (e.g. Elected Members, Faith Leaders) to identify opportunities for key messages re: domestic abuse to be delivered	Opportunity to engage with local leaders to ensure that they act as ambassadors in raising awareness and promote engagement through their networks / organisations	Co-ordinated messages regarding domestic abuse from leaders.	Assistant Director – Community Safety	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Examples of proactive work undertaken by Community leaders and impact identified
Support for local organisations / community responses in relation to domestic abuse	As part of wider culture change, local engagement and community led responses are an important aspect of the Strategy	Provision of advice and support from partnership to local organisations who wish to support the aims of this Strategy	Community Safety Manager	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Growth in local responses, community based initiatives and evidence of partnership engagement and support

Health

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Engage GP practices to discuss current responses to Domestic Abuse and to incorporate revised recording forms into existing IT systems	Victims will often present to GP's for support and due to health impacts of domestic abuse. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that all GP practices are engaged and assist in accurate recording and responses to this issue	Consistent approach from GP partnership and reassurance regarding the advice and support provided	Director of Public Health / Chief Nurse CCG	By April 2020	Evidence of GP engagement and any necessary systems changes incorporated
Review current midwifery and public health nurse routine enquiry processes	Health appointments are usually the one place that people experiencing abuse are asked to be seen alone and away from potential perpetrators. This is a valuable opportunity to ask the question regarding domestic abuse particularly as pregnancy and the impact of a new baby presents as a risk	Consistent Department of Health guidance is followed and the opportunity for safety plans and support are initiated at the earliest point during a time where risk to a victim is higher	Director of Public Health/Chief Nurse CCG	By April 2020	CCG Quality Committee and Safeguarding Children's Board to be updated
Ensure that existing mental health pathways recognise the impact of domestic abuse and provide appropriate levels of support, including responses to trauma and PTSD for survivors	Review of existing pathways to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are supported and that people who have long term mental health needs can access good quality care	Reassurance that existing pathways are robust and responsive to needs	Chief Nurse and Lead Commissioners – CCG	By September 2020	Evidence to review and any changes made to existing systems and processes

trauma and PTSD for survivors					
Partner agencies to advance opportunities for organisational learning regarding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma informed practices.	Evidence is emerging regarding the impact of ACE's and services should be aware and responsive to this learning.	Consistent approaches that consider recent research finding that can influence future practice.	Consultant – Public Health	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.	Evidence of use of ACE's to inform service delivery.
Support the local Drug & Alcohol treatment service provider to develop interventions and initiatives to address this issue.	Evidence of the lived experience of service users in relation to domestic abuse. Scale of the prevalence of drugs and alcohol during incidents and as factors within the MARAC process.	Development of local interventions and initiatives from the service provider to meet needs.	Consultant – Public Health	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.	Evidence of impact – statistical evidence and direct intervention and impact on service users.
Engagement of health services specifically used by older people to ensure awareness and responses are equivalent to other areas of healthcare (e.g. maternity)	Opportunity to mirror existing good practice in relation to older people's services – health providers are a key organisation in relation to contact with older people and therefore awareness in recognising signs of domestic abuse and training on responses is important.	Greater awareness of prevalence of domestic abuse in older people – health is an important first point of access for many older people.	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By September 2020	Evidence of enhanced training and awareness raising within specific health related sectors.

Safeguarding Children

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Work with all schools in the borough to ensure that Healthy Relationships within the new RSE curriculum includes key messages regarding domestic abuse	To ensure that young people have received important messages regarding healthy relationships within their school setting	Preventing future issues of domestic abuse and encouraging peer discussions regarding healthy relationships	Assistant Director – Community & Schools Services	By March 2020	Evidence of teaching from schools
Children’s Social Care to engage with partner agencies to share understanding of existing processes regarding Child Protection and explore ways to strengthen co-ordinated responses to perpetrators	To ensure that professionals understand Social Work practice and that other agencies are actively involved in supporting the victim of domestic abuse and the children	Greater organisational co-operation on shared objectives	Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care	By June 2020	Evidence of partnership working and greater understanding of Social Work practice
Utilise the learning from analysis of referrals into Children’s Social Care to understand demand for services and work collaboratively on how to respond to demand for support	domestic abuse is one of the main reasons for referral into Children’s Social Care and understanding demand dynamics is important to address future needs	Understanding reasons for referrals, agency concerns and themes / patterns emerging to inform future responses by agencies	Head of Service, Front Door Duty & EDT	By June 2020	Greater understanding of demand for services / support presented to Children’s Services and opportunities to work collaboratively as a partnership to respond

Review current feedback arrangements in relation to Operation Encompass to ensure that schools remain fully engaged in the process	Ensuring that the responses from schools are consistent and that feedback arrangements are effective	Reassurance regarding responses from schools	Assistant Director – Schools Support & Community Services	By April 2020	Evidence of success of use of Encompass and improvement in feedback mechanisms from schools
Ensure that all partners are responsive to requests to minimise impact on children who reside in Refuge or temporary accommodation (e.g. access to schools)	Ensuring that the lived experience of children is central to service responses and that agencies co-ordinate to be responsive to needs to children to minimise impact where possible	Greater co-ordination to ensure needs of children are met within such circumstances	Assistant Director – Schools Support & Community Services	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Feedback from Refuge on identified barriers and partner ability to resolve and remedy
Work as a partnership to explore the needs to commission therapeutic support for children who have experienced domestic abuse	Early intervention in therapeutic support can assist young people in being less vulnerable to the impact of trauma into adulthood	Meet identified needs within our communities as part of preventative activity via exploring funding options available	Assistant Directors – Children’s Commissioning	By December 2020	Domestic Abuse Sub Group will co-ordinate activity to scope out need and options to meet this through commissioned service
Ensure that support is available for pre-school age children and that providers of early years services are recognising and responding to this issue	No current provision for this age group - need to ensure providers are aware and have information in order to respond	Greater co-ordination of service delivery to meet needs and a trained workforce	Service Lead – Early Help /Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer		Evidence of engagement with sector and commissioning of service to meet identified gaps
Ensure that the voice of the children who have lived experience of domestic abuse influences future policy direction of all organisations	Agencies should record the voice of children and their lived experience to ensure that services are listening to their views when shaping service delivery	Child focused practice which recognises impact of domestic abuse on children and seeks to reduce harm and keep children safe	Director of Children’s Services	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Evidence of impact of voice of the child on service delivery and strategic direction

Ensure that all Social Workers practising in St Helens have access to good quality local resources and up to date research in relation to domestic abuse	DA is a factor in a high % of CIN and CP cases and therefore ensuring responses to this take into account local resources and are reflective of best practice is important	Ensuring that this workforce is skilled and improves outcomes for children and families	Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care / Principal Social Worker	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Evidence of good quality interventions and outcomes for children and families including use of local resources and support
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Child to Parent Abuse (CPA)

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Ensure all agencies reporting mechanisms can capture reports of CPA to evidence scale of prevalence in St Helens	To understand the scale of CPA in the borough and to build an evidence base to inform future responses	Greater understanding of the scale of this issue	Director of Children’s Services	By June 2020	Greater ability to report on this issue from partner agencies
Raise awareness through partnership forums of the issue of CPA	To ensure that this issue is recognised and that local organisations are engaged in debate and discussion	Greater awareness of the issue	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By June 2020	Evidence of this issue being discussed at appropriate fora and responses fed into wider evidence base
Engage with national charities and support groups to develop local responses to CPA	Current gap in provision if needs are identified	Learning from best practice of others to inform local responses	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By December 2020	Engagement with wider organisations once local evidence is collated

Review existing hospital discharge planning arrangements to ensure that risk of domestic abuse is fully considered when planning discharge	To ensure that systems and processes prompt healthcare workers to consider domestic abuse in discharge processes	Safe discharge planning in cases where domestic abuse has been recognised	Head of Safeguarding Adults – St Helens CCG	By September 2020	Review completed and evidence available
Engage local third sector organisations on the issue of domestic abuse and develop shared actions	There are a number of third sector organisations that offer advice and support specifically for older residents and this presents as an opportunity to work together to raise awareness for older people	Engagement with wider organisations beyond the partnership to reach out to older residents	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By December 2020	Partnership working with representatives of relevant organisations
Strengthen the housing support offer for older people who have experienced domestic abuse who do not wish to access Refuge	Recognition that leaving the family home and accessing Refuge may be barriers for many older people experiencing abuse	Options for older people outside of traditional housing pathways.	Senior Assistant Director – Housing Services	By June 2020	Organisational knowledge of housing options for older people experiencing domestic abuse will be enhanced
Recognise differences between domestic abuse and elder abuse and ensure staff are trained on both areas	Ensuring that professionals recognise the difference between domestic abuse and elder abuse to inform responses and support available	Skilled workforce able to respond to both domestic abuse and elder abuse appropriately	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Examples of staff training and general awareness raising across the partnership

Specific Groups

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Agree a shared approach towards the responsibility for the safety of people with No Recourse to Public Funds who are experiencing domestic abuse	To ensure that there is clarity and agreement on the principle to keep people safe regardless of their immigration status. To enable agencies to act with confidence in responding to cases where the person has NRPF	Consistent approach to people with this status – agreed principle of protection between agencies	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By September 2020	Domestic abuse Sub Group will lead on developing an agreed approach on this issue
Agencies working with the Gypsy / Traveller community in St Helens provide support to enable the community to be aware of domestic abuse and have access to support as required	To ensure that this community have access to information and support as required, including travellers who are not resident in St Helens	Removal of barriers to reporting and appropriate responses to requests for support	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By June 2020	Impact measured by Gypsy/ Traveller Liaison Officer throughout the lifetime of the Strategy
Work with local LGBT+ groups to raise confidence in reporting domestic abuse and understand current barriers that exist in doing so	Recognition that barriers to reporting may be different in the LGBT+ communities and ensuring that agencies work to support to remove these barriers	Removal of barriers to reporting and appropriate responses to requests for support from agencies	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By June 2020	Impact measured by recording rates of reporting and support received. Evidence of engagement with local LGBT+ groups

Ensure that any awareness campaigns are inclusive of LGBT+ communities and that all literature produced recognises that domestic abuse can occur in all relationships	Ensuring that awareness campaigns are inclusive and tackle incorrect perceptions regarding domestic abuse	Engage all communities in awareness raising and ensure that campaigns are inclusive and representative of our area	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Evidence of campaigns and feedback on actions taken
Highlight awareness across the partnership of the issue of Honour Based Violence	Ensure professionals are trained to recognise and respond to HBV appropriately.	Services should be responsive to the risk of domestic abuse across all of our communities	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	By June 2020	Greater awareness and responses across sectors in relation to HBV

Perpetrators

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Develop a set of agreed pathways across the partnership in response to Perpetrators	To ensure that agencies are consistent in their approach and that agreed responses are known and communicated to agencies	Consistent approaches to perpetrators across the sectors to address current 'invisibility' and lack of accountability for actions	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By January 2021	Pathways produced and agency agreement reached.
Develop and deliver a local perpetrator programme that accepts self-referrals from those not involved in the criminal justice system based on good practice model	Recognition that agencies have highlighted lack of a programme as a key concern	To have a mechanism available to offer support and advice to perpetrators who recognise their behaviour and want to access assistance	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By June 2020	Programme established and impact evaluated during the lifetime of this Strategy

Enhance existing systems between partner agencies to recognise and deter serial perpetrators of domestic abuse	Working as a partnership to scope out methods to disrupt known serial perpetrators of abuse	Serial perpetrators should be accountable for their actions – to address current ‘invisibility’ to services	Assistant Director – Community Safety	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Domestic abuse Strategic Group to scope out current responses and agree new methods of working
Further promotion of Claire’s Law by all partner agencies	Ensure both professionals and public are aware of their rights regarding the Disclosure Scheme and to increase use of this tool	Enable potential victims of domestic abuse to access the Disclosure Scheme to ensure that they are informed of potential domestic abuse risks from new partner	All agencies across Partnership	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Evidence of awareness raising campaigns, scale of use following professional advice
Analysis of MARAC data on perpetrators to inform future service responses	Evidence based approach required for commissioning of future services, understanding of scale of issues and analysis of themes / trends	Better understanding of the perpetrators in the borough to inform future service planning	Community Safety Manage	By September 2020	Data analysed and reporting to Sub Group established
Work with CRC to evaluate the impact of the existing Perpetrator programme and use findings to inform wider service planning	Current programme is designed for people open to CRC. Findings of programme to be shared with partners to inform wider learning	As above, evaluation will assist in identification of needs and better understanding of perpetrators to inform future service responses	Assistant Director – Community Safety	By December 2020	Evidence of impact shared amongst the Partnership

Justice & Recovery

Action	Why are we doing this?	What do we aim to achieve?	Who is responsible for delivery?	When?	How will we know that this has been delivered?
Understand existing and perceived barriers for victims to progressing with criminal cases	Work to remove barriers to hold perpetrators to account and assist victim in accessing justice	Increase in cases that progress to Court and conviction	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Reporting from IDVA service to inform future actions – monitoring of rates of conviction
Ensure Safety Planning by agencies is robust and timely for when victims leave perpetrators	Working together to reduce the risks at critical time of victim support	Keeping victims safe and effective multi-agency planning	Domestic Abuse Sub Group to review current processes	By June 2020	Review of current planning arrangements completed
Explore current barriers in relation to longer term support for victims, including financial barriers and develop appropriate responses as a partnership	Supporting victims to manage the longer term legacy issues of the abuse experienced	More targeted support by understanding and listening to the longer term needs that victims require	Domestic Abuse Prevention Officer	Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy	Completion of a task and finish review of the longer term needs of victims and alignment of agency support
Support professional to better consider the impact of technology in relation to domestic abuse	Technology can be used as an instrument in relation to coercion and control as well as used for stalking and harassment. Professionals need to keep their knowledge and responses to this issue up to date	Ensure that the workforce understand the potential impact of the use of technology in relation to domestic abuse perpetrators	Domestic Abuse Sub Group action	By December 2020	Training for staff to incorporate best practice on this issue



St. Helens
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