

Domestic Abuse Strategy



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Our Vision

For individuals, families and children in West Berkshire to live freely from Domestic Abuse

We have identified three key aims to provide the best evidence and ensure we are meeting our stated vision; an action plan also sits in conjunction with this strategy to ensure that we are tracking and monitoring our identified actions to meet our agreed aims.

There is continuously a need for training, education and awareness raising and within West Berkshire we acknowledge the importance of our communities and how they can also be a source of help, if provided with the appropriate tools/resources. Therefore, we are committed to working more closely with residents in our communities in addition to our practitioners.

There will be a heightened focus on providing appropriate and good quality interventions to not only victims of domestic abuse but to families and how we work better with external agencies who engage in work with perpetrators. Furthermore, we will continue to learn from our research to improve our local interventions and strengthen our community through a multi-agency partnership approach.

Our aims are aligned with two of the West Berkshire Councils priorities “**Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes**” and “**Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships**”. In addition, the strategy links to the aims of Thames Valley Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner which is to improve the response to reports of domestic abuse, to improve outcomes for victims of domestic and sexual abuse and to identify and implement best practice in the management of perpetrators. Finally, this is also written to be aligned with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The actions identified to meet our aims have been decided through a range of multi-agency conversations, focussing on what we can implement and change over the next 3 years. It should be acknowledged that there is ongoing work being undertaken outside of our developed strategy which is ‘business as usual’ to address Domestic Abuse in West Berkshire

Strategic aims to address Domestic Abuse in West Berkshire

1. Provide appropriate and good quality interventions to all victims and their families.

2. Provide training, education and awareness raising to local practitioners and communities.

3. Conduct audits, evaluations and research to focus on learning and improving our local interventions.

1. Provide appropriate and good quality interventions to all victims and their families.

Those experiencing domestic abuse and their families need easily accessible, quality support. Services need to be empathetic and supportive to help the victims to make changes in their lives. Interventions should be appropriately in place to support and help the families and children who witness domestic abuse. Finally, in order to prevent further harm, perpetrators should be offered an intervention to address their behaviour.

Outcomes:

- Increasing prosecutions or other court interventions
- All survivors are supported Post Abuse (The BB4K Programme)

Impact:

- Ensuring victims and perpetrators get the most effective help and support
- Victims in rural communities are not further disadvantaged
- Less repeat offences of abuse reported to the Police
- More families living without abuse
- Increase awareness of how to get help, increase of those accessing help in rural communities

Actions to deliver this aim:

- a) All services that support victims will recognise the link between domestic abuse, substance misuse and emotional ill-health (trio of vulnerabilities). Services will ensure that their internal assessments are holistic in order to accurately assess the person and refer/signpost to specialist agencies for suitable interventions if additional support needs are identified.
- b) All domestic abuse support services will review current practices to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of work so that the needs of victims with a disability, with no recourse to public funds (where appropriate) and those from minority and vulnerable groups such as Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT+), Men and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) continue to be met.
- c) Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse, both convicted and non-convicted, to reduce risk of reoffending and harm to both partners and children through a multi-agency approach
- d) Work with children under the age of 18 years old who perpetuate abuse against a parent(s) in order to reduce the likelihood of further harm and possibility of future offending.
- e) All agencies to work collaboratively to improve our engagement in rural communities by directing outreach activities to low domestic abuse incidents or no incident areas in rural communities.

2. Provide training, education and awareness raising to local practitioners and communities.

To continue addressing Domestic Abuse in West Berkshire we need trained practitioners, who have good working knowledge of domestic abuse in all its forms. There needs to be opportunities to access learning materials and campaigns to raise awareness of the issues to West Berkshire staff, partner agencies and the public. Additional awareness raising will be undertaken within our communities to help towards the early identification of abuse and enable more victims to come forward and access support.

Outcomes:

- Reduction in repeat incidents of Domestic Abuse
- Increase in reporting of Domestic Abuse

Impact:

- Victims, survivors and children feel safer
- More victims (including those reporting HBV or FGM) getting the right support and assistance to escape or manage abusive relationships
- Children associated with these referrals will get support to manage the emotional harm and live in households free of abusive behaviours

Actions to deliver this aim:

- a) Create a plan collaboratively to increase understanding and awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse in all its forms in local communities and organisations through a coordinated approach by offering domestic abuse awareness and/or champions training to residents in our communities and ensuring any internal campaigns are shared with our Domestic Abuse Strategy Group for individual agencies to support/share through their own communication channels.
- b) Provide training in recognising and understanding HBV, FGM and stalking to practitioners to ensure that there is a better awareness of these issues and we can effectively respond/report when faced with these forms of abuse.
- c) Promote and raise awareness of unhealthy, abusive relationships including coercive and controlling behaviour and be able to recognise the increased vulnerability of Child Exploitation in all its forms.
- d) Work more proactively with children/young people themselves to increase their knowledge of and raise their awareness of domestic abuse. To subsequently protect young people from the harm associated with domestic abuse, know where/how to get support or becoming victims and potential perpetrators.
- e) All agencies to work cooperatively to improve the offer to rural communities by undertaking more awareness raising work by approaching local churches and parish councils across West Berkshire to display domestic abuse support posters in the local villages, pub/public toilets and village newsletters.

3. Conduct audits, evaluations and research to focus on learning and improving our local interventions.

To understand domestic abuse and determine the most effective and suitable responses for victims, children and perpetrators we need to analysis the latest data and research. In order to improve our local interventions, data is reliant from a range of multi-agency partners to effectively make changes.

Outcomes:

- Learning from local and national audits informs ongoing service delivery
- Improved data collection from partner agencies
- Improvement to interventions based on effective evaluations from our data collection

Impact:

- Through a multi-agency approach we can forecast where any gaps or areas are that aren't being covered
- Changes are made to the services we offer to make it a better fit for all victims, families, practitioners and communities for aims 1 and 2

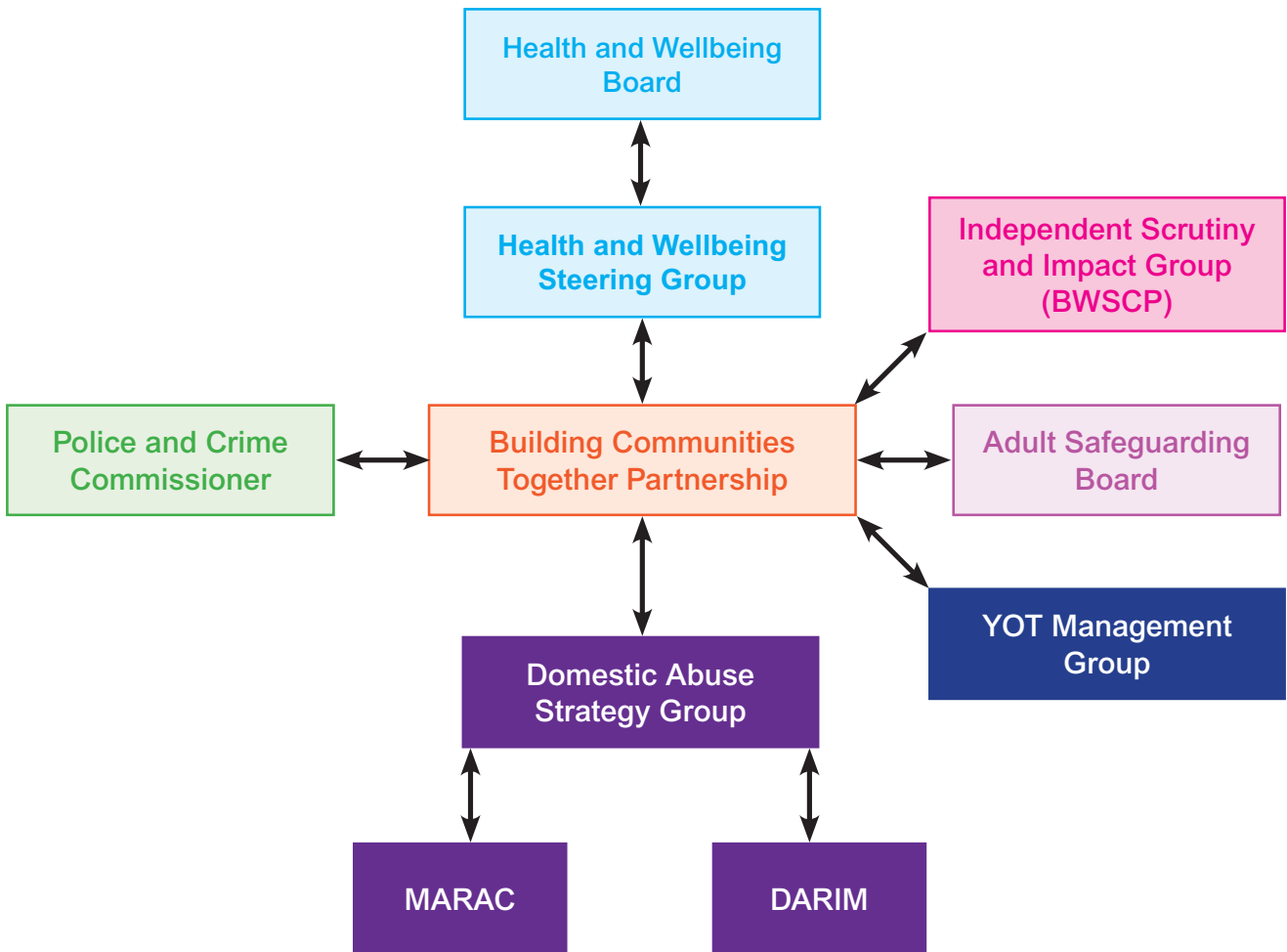
Actions to deliver this aim:

- a) Undertake reviews of available national data to track trends and types of recorded crime.
- b) Audit and analyse risk assessments completed by West Berkshire children and adult social care.
- c) Review Thames Valley Police data to identify any visible trends in repeat incidents and numbers of domestic abuse reports in West Berkshire.
- d) All services to provide good quality evaluation reports to be shared with a variety of boards that sit in conjunction with the Building Communities Together Partnership.

Implementation and Governance

The structure chart below illustrates the strategic approach to addressing domestic abuse in West Berkshire. The progress of the strategy is reviewed quarterly at the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group and is then reported quarterly to the Building Communities Together (BCT) Partnership.

Structure



Glossary of terms

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BWSCP	Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership
DARIM	Domestic Abuse Repeat Incident Meeting
DASG	Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HBV	Honour Based Violence
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PHE	Public Health England
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
TVP	Thames Valley Police
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls



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The infographic used on the front page of our West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-23 was designed to support the #YouAreNotAlone public awareness raising campaign set up by the UK Government when faced with an extremely challenging time presented by Covid-19 to reassure those affected by domestic abuse that support services remain available.