

BIRMINGHAM

Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023

Changing Attitudes Changing lives



Making a positive difference everyday to people's lives



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Foreword

Welcome to the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023. Domestic abuse is a serious issue, both nationally and here in Birmingham. It has a drastic, negative and long-lasting impact upon the safety, health and wider life chances of women, children, and families; and drives wider crises such as homelessness and financial exclusion.

Tackling domestic abuse must become everyone's business. The way we respond to domestic abuse as a city is a reflection of our values. We are making a commitment to becoming a trauma informed city; leading the way in tackling domestic abuse, the fear it creates and the harm it causes.

As partners, together we are sending a clear message that:

- We will not tolerate domestic abuse;
- We will take robust, appropriate action against abusers;
- We will make the significant culture change required to influence the behaviours of organisations and future generations.

In doing so, we will ensure that women, their children and families are liberated from fear, insecurity and harm, and can lead the safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives that they deserve.

Councillor Paulette Hamilton
Chair of Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Domestic violence is a crime. We are committed to preventing domestic abuse, improving the support and protection for victims and their children, and bringing domestic abusers to justice.

Together with the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board, we will hold joint responsibility for the successful delivery of the strategy. With this work being actively driven by the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group, I am confident we will succeed. Collectively driving action against domestic abuse at this level demonstrates the strength of commitment Birmingham has made to tackling domestic abuse in our city, reflecting;

- The complex nature of domestic abuse and the associated harm and inequalities it creates including mental and physical ill health, homelessness and unemployment;
- The multi-layered and co-ordinated health, social and criminal justice approaches required to tackle this issue;
- The multi-agency input, investment and response required to achieve this.

I believe our strong partnerships, collective efforts and expertise will make a significant difference to help individuals, families and communities feel safe; and live lives free from the threat of harm that domestic abuse creates.

Steve Harris
Chair of Birmingham Community Safety Police and Crime Board
Operations Commander (Birmingham North) West Midlands Fire Service

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Commitment Statement

We warmly welcome the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-23 that sets the challenges and offers opportunities to deliver the aim of a safer city for women and children affected by domestic abuse.

By providing clear direction to put women and children at the centre of our work and to recognise domestic abuse when confronted with it; to offer best practice responses; to challenge ourselves and each other in order to achieve positive outcomes, we can make it possible for women and children to live free from the fear of violence and abuse.

Multi-agency partnerships have at every level, across Birmingham, been key in developing this strategy. It is only by using those partnerships effectively that we can provide the leadership to make the necessary system and cultural changes that will make Birmingham a city free from domestic abuse.

Councillor Tristan Chatfield

**Chair of Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities**

And

Maureen Connolly

**Deputy Chair of Violence Against Women and Children Steering
Group Chief Executive - Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid**



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Introduction

Domestic abuse touches the lives, directly or indirectly, of most people in Birmingham. The sheer scale of domestic abuse causes untold harm to individuals, children and families, communities and damages the social fabric of the city.

This strategy adopts the domestic abuse definition as set out in the Domestic Act 2021:

(2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if – (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive.

(3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following –

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

(4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to –

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or (b) obtain goods or services.

Scope of the Strategy

This strategy responds to:

- Adults (predominantly women), children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse,
- Children (under the age of 18 years) who are experiencing abuse,
- Adults (predominantly men) who are perpetrating domestic abuse.

Birmingham has a strong history of partnership working in addressing domestic abuse. Despite this, there is now evidence that domestic abuse in the city, as elsewhere, is increasing and more people are known to be at risk than ever before. At the same time, our public services are shrinking and we need to find new ways to keep our population safe and healthy, and enable our communities to thrive.

We know a great deal about domestic abuse, not least that left unchecked, domestic abuse gets worse over time. As such, the case for identifying victims and intervening earlier to reduce harm is clear. However, our long-term ambition is for a city free from domestic abuse and we must therefore take all practicable steps to eliminate domestic abuse, reducing harm and demand for services along the way.

This will require everyone to expect equality and respect in their relationships; and every agency understanding the fundamental nature of coercive control within domestic abuse and responding effectively as a result

It responds to domestic in the context of:

- Abuse between those who are ‘personally connected’ and over the age of 16 years,
- Abuse which continues post-separation and has formerly ended which is known to be a particularly dangerous time for women and their children, and a time when children are often used by a perpetrator to continue the abuse,
- Forced marriage, so-called ‘honour-based violence’ and other forms of violence against women that are intrinsically linked to domestic abuse.

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Ensuring Equality in Our Response to Domestic Abuse

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

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

The national strategy Ending Violence against Women and Girls (2016) emphasises the importance of recognising the gendered nature of domestic abuse.

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

This does not discount the responsibilities instilled by the Public Sector Duty (s149) of the Equalities Act 2010 to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups.

As such, this strategy also takes account of and responds to the needs of population groups sharing the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

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

Defining and Understanding Domestic Abuse

Defining Domestic Abuse

Controlling or coercive behaviour was written into law under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and helps us to better understand legal definition as set down in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (p5).

Controlling behaviour is behaviour that makes people sub-ordinate or dependent by isolating them from friends and family and other sources of support, taking control of their resources and depriving them of their independence.

Coercive behaviour includes acts of assault, threat, humiliation or intimidation that are used to harm, punish or frighten another person.

Coercive control is ‘the micromanagement of everyday life. Micromanagement crushes the spirit even more fundamentally than the deprivation of basic necessities because it leaves little space for a person to breathe’. (Stark, 2007)

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Wider legislation helps us to understand the nature of domestic abuse from a statutory context.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent in April 2021. This Act will for the first time create a cross-Government statutory definition of domestic abuse, ensure domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable, and is actively challenged, across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. In Birmingham we welcome the measures brought in by the Act and have already been actively working towards these over several years. However, we recognise there are areas in which we need to improve our response to domestic abuse and the Act further increases the need for co-operation across public services, particularly when it comes to meeting the new duties placed on the local authority. Responding to the implications of the Domestic Abuse Act is a key part of this strategy, and will be a priority for the action plan.

Specifically, the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 4)** states that it is a requirement for the Local Authority to assess and make provision of support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse. An extensive assessment was carried out across the city to understand the domestic abuse provision for victims not only within accommodation settings but also for victims and survivors living within the community. This enabled the voices of victims to be heard to support and change the strategy.

A shadow Board was established in advance, and the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board has been developed within the city which is committed to informing change, reviewing the strategy and will be reporting to the national governmental steering group annually to provide robust analysis of provision, as required by the duty.

Legislation

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill was amended in 2021 to recognise domestic abuse and sexual violence as a serious crime. Birmingham is committed to recognising this for all victims within the city.

But also, the **Adoption and Children Act 2002 (s120)** extended the definition of harm to include ‘impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another’ which requires children who experience domestic abuse at home to be considered in need of help and protection from the Local Authority, as well as those that are directly injured or abused.

Likewise, the **Care Act 2014** sets out a clear legal framework for how the Health and Social Care system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. It specifies that freedom from abuse (and neglect) is a key aspect of a person’s wellbeing.

In this way, the responsibility to respond to domestic abuse is held by all statutory agencies charged with safeguarding and protecting both adults and children.

Understanding Domestic Abuse

Coercive control lies at the heart of domestic abuse and all the aspects of the domestic abuse that become visible to others, need to be understood within this context.

As agencies, family or friends, we often don't know what lies beneath what we see, but evidence tells us it is likely to be there. Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews in Birmingham over the last five years tells us that:

- When we see physical harm, we need to understand that we have already missed a high proportion of the abuse which has already taken place. We also need to understand that the majority of victims do not experience frequent, sustained or significant acts of physical violence.
- We need to understand that rules, consequences and fear are consistently present. Despite a victim's reframed reality the victim will constantly be trying to keep the children safe from harm.
- All victims are isolated as part of the abuse, and we need to understand the severity and extent of the constant levels of surveillance and monitoring that she will be subjected to during the relationship and post-separation.
- When we think a victim is unsure or indecisive, we need to understand the complex trauma through constant threats and manipulation, inferred or real, that she may face combined with the constant erosion of her self-worth.
- We need to stop victim-blaming and understand that victims find 'safety zones' to protect themselves and their children, despite being in a context of no control.
- We need to understand that children experience the abuse directly. We need to work towards creating a robust Criminal Justice System that holds perpetrators accountable rather than the current position of relying too heavily upon an abused mother to keep her children safe. We as agencies have a duty to keep the family safe. We need to ensure agencies explore all options, and that children are taken into care as a last resort.
- When child contact is granted, we need to understand the very real risk this poses to both adult and child victims at the hands of the abuser, as this is a significant factor in post-separation abuse.
- When a victim has no access to money, we need to recognise the extensive aspects of economic abuse that an abuser will employ during the relationship and through post-separation, through acts of spending beyond affordability, stealing or withholding money and creating debt in the victim's name.
- We need to understand the threat that an abuser poses to their victims and those close to the victims. This is magnified for those abusers with mental ill-health and substance misuse, which are known to be a potential accelerant. Services working with abusers in any context need to be professionally curious and uphold safeguarding processes as an overriding priority.

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Domestic Abuse in Birmingham

- Birmingham is the largest local authority area in Europe and growing faster than the UK average. At the same time, domestic abuse is increasing in the city with an estimated 41,000 individuals experiencing domestic abuse, the vast majority of whom are women.ⁱ
- Birmingham is a young city where more than a quarter of the population are under 18 years of age. By the time they reach adulthood, more than 1 in 5 children in the city will have experienced domestic abuse at home.
- We recognise that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child's health, education and well-being. Locally, domestic abuse is a major factor for 62% of children needing Local Authority support, care or protection.ⁱⁱ
- Reported domestic abuse increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant increase in reporting with 85,714 incidents reported to police with 55,820 being recorded as crimes compared to 40,160 the previous year.
- Reported domestic abuse has increased: in the five-year period from 2015 to 2020, the volume of Police recorded incidents and crimes in the West Midlands rose from 52,042 in 2015 to 67,998 in 2020 (Crest report). Winter 2020 was observed

to have a particular spike in reported incidents and in victims seeking help from services.

- Referrals to MARAC – which manages high risk cases through a multi-agency risk assessment conference approach – have increased year on year from 2018/19 when there were 1521 referrals to MARAC to 2020/21 when there were 2943 referrals to MARAC in Birmingham, it represents 49% of demand across the West Midlands. For one quarter from April to June 2021 there was a 59.8% increase in referrals in Birmingham.
- Across the West Midlands Domestic abuse related crime has increased from 10% to 15% in terms of Police demand this has been over five years from 2015 to 2020.

- Domestic abuse includes forced marriage, which is significantly under-reported and may be up to 35 times higher than reports currently suggest. The West Midlands is the second highest region, after London, for calls to the Forced Marriage Unit.
- Our population is living longer. A local primary care initiative, known as the Iris programme, has shown that GPs are in a strong position to identify domestic abuse for women who are traditionally underrepresented in services, such as older women and disabled women. Through the Iris programme nearly 700 more women have been identified by GPs.▼
- Since 2011 there have been 42 domestic homicide reviews in Birmingham, with 13 currently being processed. 34 women were killed and 8 men were killed through domestic violence. Domestic homicide reviews and the Domestic abuse needs assessment in Birmingham have identified the need for a cultural change in the way that agencies safeguard women

and children, and those with protected characteristics, from abuse and particularly call for a greater understanding of how coercive control affects families and how agencies need to respond.

- In surveys and meetings conducted with survivors as part of the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment for Birmingham an expectation that in particular Statutory services do better in their interactions and support for victims and their children who are also victims came across strongly. High levels of satisfaction were recorded with Voluntary sector commissioned and non commissioned Domestic abuse services.
- The Birmingham Children's Trust's Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) has found that during the period May 2020 to May 2021, an average of 22.3% of monthly CASS contacts cite domestic abuse as the primary reason for referral.
- Housing remains one of the biggest concerns in Birmingham with levels of demand increasing each year. DA is the third highest cause of homelessness.



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Impact of Domestic Abuse

- Every child deserves the best start in life. Yet one in six pregnant women will experience domestic violence, and around 30% of domestic violence starts or worsens during pregnancy. Combine this with the prevalence of Non-Fatal Strangulation in pregnancy (37%) and it becomes easier to see why domestic abuse is a significant factor in the onset of pre-term labour, and maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity.¹ (It is worth noting that non-fatal strangulation is now a crime under the DA Act).
- Growing up in an abusive environment and living in a constant state of control, abuse and terror can have profound consequences for a family's well-being, far into the future. The majority of medium risk victims and their children will live with their abuser around 3 years, and high risk 2.3 years.^{vi}
- The impact of domestic abuse on the mental health of victims is severe; dealing emotionally with the abuse and trauma, creates complex trauma responses that can often manifest in depression, anxiety and suicidal ideations. More than a third (36%) of women who have experienced severe physical and sexual violence have attempted suicide.^{vii}
- The impact of domestic abuse on the physical health of victims is severe; the trauma manifests physically and can create digestive problems, sleeplessness, weight gain, weight loss, underactive or overactive thyroid, fibromyalgia, eating disorders.
- Victims of domestic abuse and their families are often subjected to economic abuse. In a recent survey, 52% of women respondents who were still living with their abuser said they could not afford to leave because they had no money of their own.^{viii}
- Victims of domestic abuse may turn to coping strategies such as alcohol or drugs (prescribed or illegal), in order to numb-out the abuse that they are experiencing, or may be forced into dependency by their abusers. Women experiencing significant domestic abuse are more than twice as likely to have an alcohol problem and eight times more likely to be dependent than others.^{ix}
- By virtue of their marginalisation in society, some groups, particularly those with protected characteristics, will face additional barriers to receiving the support that they need. As a result they can potentially face continued abuse.
- This impact of domestic abuse upon society, community and economy is rarely given due consideration despite the fact that domestic abuse fractures families, communities, workplaces and local economies. Public services such as the Police, Health, Housing and Children's Services are increasingly overwhelmed by responding to domestic abuse. Domestic abuse was estimated to cost society £66 billion every year in 2019. In 2021 with the application of inflation, that figure is now assumed to be £72 billion.
- Despite these increasing demands for services, domestic abuse still remains overlooked. Without effective support, prevention and protection, women and children will be subjected to escalating abuse. On average, four women are killed by their abusers each year in Birmingham. The majority of these were trying to leave or end the relationship at the time.

¹ The British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology



Our Vision

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

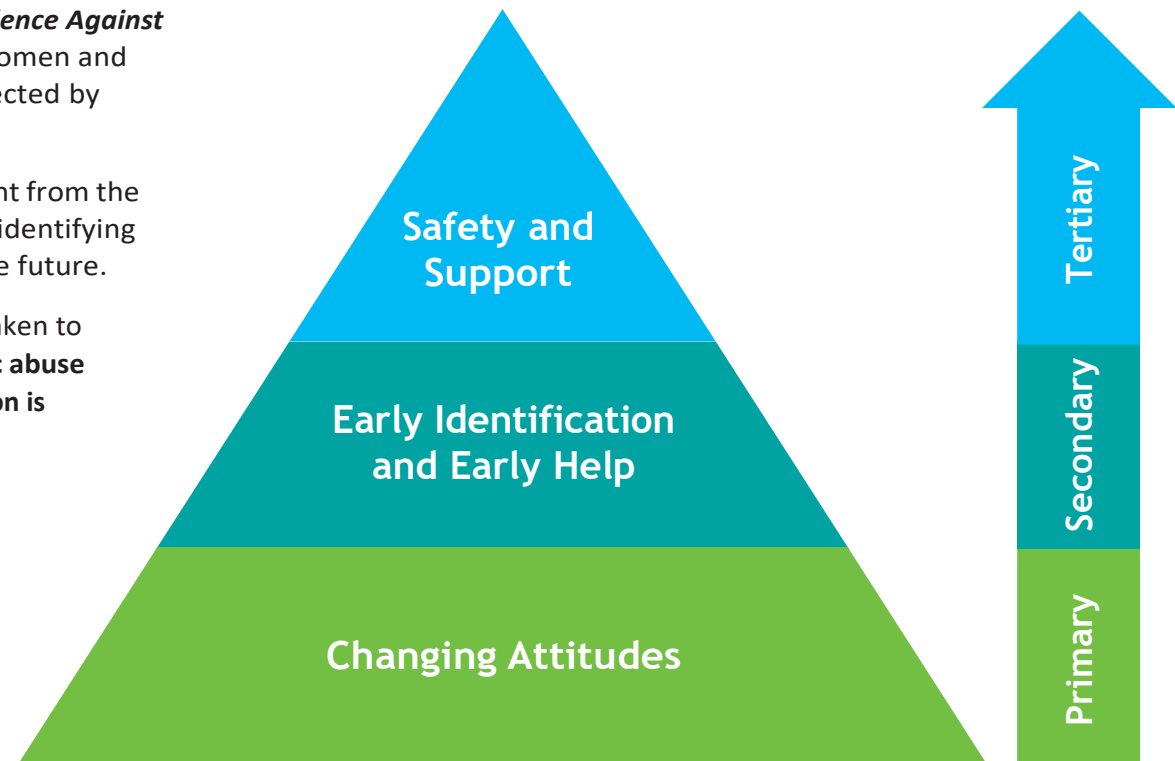
Our vision is rightly ambitious and cannot be achieved by a single agency in isolation. To be successful, **domestic abuse must become everyone's business.**

Our strategy sets out the city's commitment to tackling domestic abuse. Guided by the principles of the national strategy ***Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2016)***, we are focusing our approach on women and children – recognising that they are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse.

As a result, the starting point for our new strategy is different from the past as the focus shifts towards pro-active prevention and identifying domestic abuse as early as possible to limit its impact in the future.

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

Our new strategy outlines a layered prevention model and focuses on three key priorities:



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Changing Attitudes

To be successful we must:

Prevent domestic abuse by challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster it.

What do we mean by Changing Attitudes?

Changing attitudes in every sphere of public life starts with how organisations respond to domestic abuse. This is about driving the step-change that is required in order to effect culture change and empowering practice across organisations through strategic leadership, operational management and supervision.

Changing attitudes also means including formal education, teaching children from a young age of the value and importance of equality and respect. In this way, children will receive these messages from a young age and throughout their formal education. This will gradually and generationally begin to change expectations regarding the social norms expected in their own conduct, friendships and relationships as they grow.

It also means that young people will be better able to understand the damaging effects of objectifying women, in person and via social media, and better equipped to deal with cyber bullying and abuse should they experience it. It is through education and equality that we can better support and inform our next generation regarding domestic abuse.

Changing attitudes means increasing public awareness so that those experiencing abuse will be better able to identify what they are experiencing and know how to access support sooner.

Improving our response to holding perpetrators accountable will reduce the availability of excuses that abusers use to deny their abusive behaviours. Domestic abuse is a crime and abusers' behaviour should not be acceptable to families, friends, work colleagues, or organisations.

We want to encourage all employers in the city to adopt domestic abuse workplace policies that include support for employees who are victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse. A domestic abuse workplace policy will create safe spaces for employees to disclose with confidence that they will be supported.

Successfully **Changing Attitudes** means an:



Increase in healthy and positive relationships.



Decrease in social tolerance of domestic abuse.

Early Identification & Early Help

To be successful we must:

Intervene early to prevent harm and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on victims and families.

What do we mean by Early Identification and Early Help?

Early identification and early help means understanding the need to move away from a framework of reference predicated on physical violence. Increasing training and knowledge will strengthen first responses in every organisation so that all workers are able to identify domestic abuse and intervene at the earliest opportunity – long before noticeable physical violence ever occurs, if indeed it ever does.

It is about improving the effectiveness of domestic abuse support pathways and working with ‘Trusted Professionals’ to encourage people to share their experiences and identify abuse early.

We must strengthen our partnership arrangements -from strategic plans to frontline practice - so that with a shared knowledge of how to identify domestic abuse, we can do so, responding at the earliest opportunity and in an effective, co-ordinated way.

When domestic abuse is left unchecked and without intervention, the abuse continues in parallel with the impact on its victims. The earlier agencies intervene to support and protect victims and to prevent

abusers’ continuing actions, the greater the chance of reducing harm and improving recovery.

We need to ensure that victims receive the help they need to recover from their experience so that the impact is reduced in the long term. To achieve will also require effective interventions to prevent abusers continuing to abuse.

Responding effectively to domestic abuse at the ‘front door’ in a large, diverse city like Birmingham requires a strong system behind the scenes. All agencies must know not only how to provide a first response themselves regarding perpetrators or victims but also what to do next, including knowing who to refer to and when.

Successful **early identification and early help** means that:

Domestic abuse is identified earlier and victims are able to recover from abuse.

Escalation and harm from domestic abuse is reduced

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Safety and Support

To be successful we must:

Ensure that victims of domestic abuse are protected from harm and supported to recover.

What do we mean by Safety and Support?

Effective safety and support means ensuring that abusers are held accountable for their actions and educated in how to change their behaviours. This will make a significant contribution to keeping victims safe and protected from harm, and to ensuring access to the right support at the right time to support victims in their recovery.

It means ensuring the first response of frontline agencies is consistent in recognising different types of domestic abuse, and that non-violent is not assumed to mean no risk or harm. It also means training that will help agencies better understand how to ask the right questions and robustly record the evidence they have sought.

It is important that victims of abuse and their children are supported and protected, while action is taken against their abusers.

There continues to be too much reliance placed upon the non-abusive parent – overwhelmingly the mother – to keep themselves and their children safe. Abusive fathers often remain invisible in child protection proceedings even when they are the ones creating the risk. In this way, there has been insufficient focus on addressing the behaviour of domestic abusers.

To provide safety and support effectively requires an increased focus on preventing abusers from harming others.

Previous changes in the law such as Coercive Control (s76 Serious Crime Act 2015) pave the way for our strengthened response to take positive action through effective enforcement of the legislation, which would also serve as a deterrent.

Safety and Support means ensuring that we must make prevention of abuse a priority, while also ensuring that support networks are available for women and their children to assist them in their recovery from the trauma of domestic abuse.

Successful **Safety and Support** means:

Increasing the number of victims and their children who feel they can live their lives in safety.

Reducing the risk of harm from domestic abusers.

To be successful we must:

Governance and Accountability

Strategic Oversight

Birmingham Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board is responsible for, and committed to, ensuring that Birmingham's vision for domestic abuse becomes reality. The board will work jointly with the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership to ensure there is a community co-ordinated response across the city.

Strategic Assurance

The Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board will seek assurance together, and through their respective governance structures, on the effectiveness of partnership working in the development and implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

Monitoring Progress

The Domestic Abuse Commissioning Team will report progress against the Joint Action Plan to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board who will oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership will undertake a joint review of progress against the Joint Action Plan on an annual basis up to and including 2023.

Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

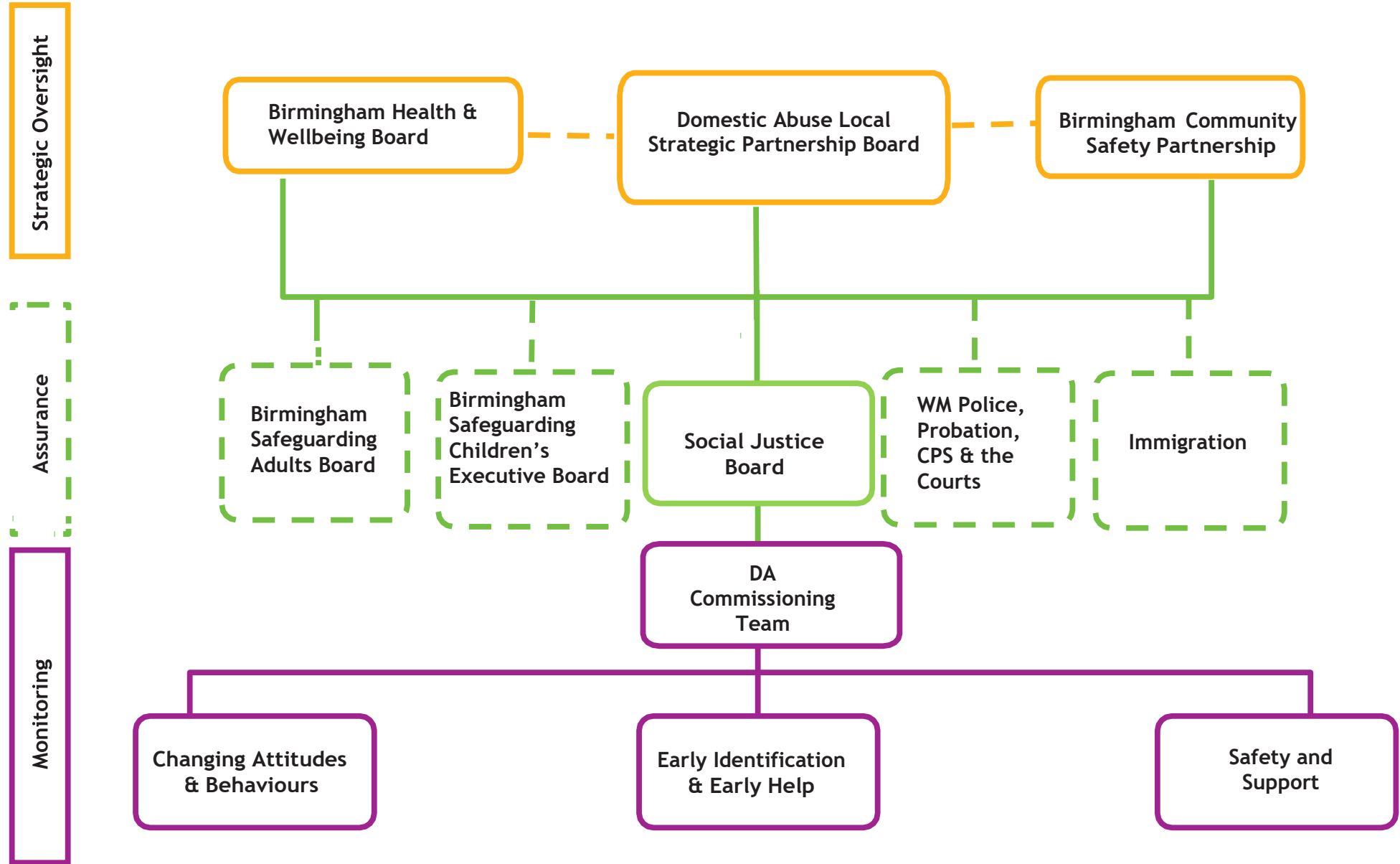
As such, our approach has and will continue to be informed by the latest available intelligence when determining key actions associated with the delivery of our strategy vision.



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Governance

The strategy will be monitored through the following governance structure:



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Joint Action Plan

Delivering the vision

Our Joint Action Plan is set in the context of the following essential principles:

- There is a strategic, system wide approach to responding to domestic abuse and preventing it in the future;
- Women, children and groups sharing protected characteristics who experience domestic abuse are at the centre of any action or intervention;

- There is a clear focus on abusers in order to keep victims safe;
- Communities are involved, engaged and empowered to seek, design and deliver solutions to domestic abuse.

The vision is ambitious and to be successful, significant system and organisational culture change is required. The following action plan sets the strategic direction for the next five years. The actions have been split into whole system and priority specific actions, the detail of which will continue to develop over a period of time.

Whole Systems Actions

Whole Systems Actions	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
Part 4 Domestic Abuse Act 2021		
That standardised wider record-keeping is adopted across Statutory and commissioned services and encouraged in non-commissioned services. This should be agreed through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board.	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board	August 2022
Provide the data that is required by the Secretary of State at the end of the financial year.	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board	March 2023
Action Plan to be reviewed yearly; however, it will be edited and updated if any trends and gaps are identified.	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board	March 2023
At least one person to represent the voluntary and community sector on the board (to include all 'grassroots' organisations.	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board	April 2022
Ensure safe accommodation is suitable for all and accessible to those with protected characteristics in accordance to the Equality Act 2010.	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board	January 2023
Birmingham City Council to ensure victims who present as homeless due to experiencing domestic abuse are placed on the highest banding with support to provide safe accommodation, finding long term sustainable accommodation with the vision of reducing traumatisation.	Birmingham City Council	April 2022
Where areas of work are identified through the action plan task and finish groups to be created to lead and feedback to the board.	Birmingham City Council	April 2022
Transform Birmingham's approach to domestic abuse and coercive control in line with the findings from DHRs/SARs and SCRs through the design and implementation of a trauma informed Birmingham workforce development strategy that:	VAWG/DA Lead	April 2022

- Undertakes a domestic abuse training needs analysis for all organisations and delivers both multi-agency and service specific training, alongside domestic abuse workforce policies being implemented.
- Draws on the expertise of the specialist domestic abuse sector.
- Designs best practice guidelines and toolkits to support mainstream workers.
- Delivers against the learning from domestic homicide reviews and Serious Case Reviews where domestic abuse has been identified by creating a coordinated response plan to any recommendations and learning.
- Enables staff to work with domestic abuse to understand the multiplicity of need and respond effectively to prevention, early identification, early intervention and the safety and support needs of women, children and men according to their function.

Community Safety Partnership December 2022

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Whole Systems Actions	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
<p>Ensure the quality of domestic abuse service provision through the design and implementation of a quality assurance framework that incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of agencies against the new Kite Mark Accreditation informed by West Midlands Domestic Abuse Standards. Specific analysis of domestic abuse through the Children's Safeguarding workforce through Section 11 Safeguarding Audit. Specific analysis of domestic abuse response across the Birmingham Workforce through the Adult Safeguarding Assurance process. Quality assurance of Domestic Homicide Reviews and child and adult safeguarding reviews where domestic abuse is a feature. 	<p>Birmingham City Council</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p>	<p>March 2022</p>
Ensure strategic leads across the city work together to collaboratively shape and drive key priorities and actions across related strategy areas including Housing, Homelessness, Early Help, Financial Inclusion, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing, and LGBT to recognise, enable and ensure a robust response to domestic abuse.		
Strengthen evidence and intelligence gathering and sharing to inform policy, practice and priorities for future action. This includes ongoing collation of intelligence to better understand areas of underreporting in particular cohorts e.g. groups sharing protected characteristics.		
Develop and implement an integrated and multi-agency commissioning model in line with the Violence Against Women and Girls: National Statement of Expectations (2016). This should strike a balance between provision for safety and protection, as well as earlier intervention and recovery models for both adults and children.	<p>Birmingham City Council</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>OPCC</p>	
Recognise and build on Birmingham-based projects that are effective in their response to domestic abuse and are supported by a strong, locally developed, practice-informed evidence-base.		
Develop and implement a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), SAR and SCR Action Plan to monitor progress and hold the whole system and / or specific organisations to account in responding to recommendations made in DHRs.	Community Safety Partnership	April 2022
<p>Work with strategic leads in Housing, Homelessness and Safeguarding Adult leads to drive improvement in Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and non-regulated accommodation provision through the development of quality standards and local markers.</p> <p>Birmingham City Council to obtain DAHA Accreditation supporting Housing Providers to obtain accreditation to demonstrate best practice with a Whole Housing Approach.</p>	<p>Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board</p> <p>Birmingham City Council - Housing Lead</p>	<p>(Start) April 2022 (Completion March 2023)</p>

Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority-Specific Actions:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
Changing Attitudes and Behaviours	Prevent domestic abuse by challenging the attitudes & behaviours that foster it.	Primary	Widen community engagement and public awareness of domestic abuse, including forced marriage and honour-based violence, by encouraging community-led preventative approaches.	DA Board Equality Sub-Group	March 2023
			Undertake targeted community engagement with groups currently under-represented in services such as BME communities, LGBT communities, disabled and/or older women.		March 2023
			Explore potential of practices and programmes to raise awareness and develop young people's expectations of healthy and positive relationships.	Children's Trust Richmond Fellowship Other grassroots services such as The Sharan Project	March 2023
			Work with Birmingham Education Partnership and specialist services to agree a Birmingham-wide whole-school approach to domestic abuse through strengthening equality and respect, and in line with statutory guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education - 2016).*	Op Encompass Education Safeguarding Children's Trust Mencap	July 2022
			Refresh and roll out guidance to schools, colleges, universities and youth settings on dealing with domestic abuse, including the use of nationally available campaign materials and the local development of curriculum materials. To consider the guidance within the Schools Charter which provides advice and guidance regarding domestic abuse including HBV and FGM.	Op Encompass Children's Trust Richmond Fellowship BSWA	July 2022
			Develop and implement campaign and public awareness methods to effectively challenge attitudes to violence against women, children and men.		March 2023
			Develop and implement the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention workplace standard in line with the West Midlands Combined Authority work on the Public Health England Workplace Wellbeing Charter and encourage Birmingham wide adoption of workplace policies on domestic abuse through Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.	BCC Public Health CCG	March 2023
Early Identification & Early Help	Intervene early to prevent harm and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on victims.	Secondary	Strengthen the city-wide understanding of need by accessing and analysing available data, evidence, service standards and intelligence with input from victims and key partners including the City Council, Health, Criminal Justice, Education, Housing, Specialist and wider third sector.	Community Safety Partnership?	March 2023

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Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority Action:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
			Establish early contact points and required actions in Primary Care and Emergency Care to improve the effectiveness for the identification of and response to domestic abuse.	Community Safety Partnership	March 2023
			In line with DA Act 2021, all victims of domestic abuse must be prioritised, and in line with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that appropriate prevention and relief duties are in place for victims of domestic abuse. This includes information, advice, guidance, and support from the voluntary and community sector to prevent homelessness.	Birmingham City Council	April 2022
			Establish a holistic, positive pathway and intervention hub for victims of domestic abuse that is capable of addressing multiple needs.		
			Stabilise and expand practice-based domestic abuse training, support and referral programme.		
			Define and effectively communicate 'what works' and 'what is safe practice' for 'whole family' approaches to domestic abuse.	Children's Safeguarding Board Children's Trust Op Encompass Richmond Fellowship BSWA	March 2023
			Embed Birmingham's current domestic abuse support pathways across all relevant services to improve and optimise effectiveness.	BVSC	March 2022
			Expand current helpline provision.	BSWA	April 2022
			Introduce early identification and early help pathways with 'Trusted Professionals' and across health and social care.		April 2022
			Evaluate the Child to Parent abuse pilot currently being undertaken in Birmingham Youth Offending Service with a view to extending the programme across wider services if effective.	(Independent evaluation)	To be completed 6 months after the programme to be able to monitor effective outcomes and change
			Support initiatives to improve multi-agency responses to domestic abuse such as the Social, Emotional and Mental Health Pathfinder which seeks to transform education for children and young people with multiple needs, including domestic abuse.	Birmingham Children's Safeguarding Board	March 2023
			Introduce an 'Ask Me' - type scheme where a person experiencing abuse can disclose in places they trust and where staff have been trained to provide an initial safe response.	Birmingham City Council CCG Public Health	March 2023

Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority Action:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
Safety and Support	Ensure that those individuals experiencing domestic abuse are protected from harm and supported to recover.	Tertiary	Ensure there is a clear pathway for victims to access safe and appropriate accommodation and effective community-based support.	Birmingham City Council All domestic Abuse providers	April 2022
			Strengthen the multi-agency response for those affected by domestic abuse including homeless prevention and health and wellbeing support, recognising that people cannot be kept safe without holistically addressing all of their needs.	DA Board	
			Agree a common tool across agencies for assessing risk and threat from domestic abuse, following the review being undertaken by the College of Policing.		
			Ensure appropriate referrals across public protection processes and consistent multi-agency attendance at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC), Domestic Violence Tasking, Adult Safeguarding, Child Protection, and Integrated Offender Management meetings.	Community Safety Partnership Board	March 2023
			Guarantee a proportionate level of independent support for complex, high need victims of domestic abuse (e.g. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors).	Birmingham City Council	April 2022
			Establish a clear pathway for Homeless Prevention and Home Options including civil interventions and home security measures.	Birmingham City Council	April 2022
			Develop a multi-agency abuser management framework which involves management, diversion, disruption and wherever possible prosecution of abusers with the aim of protection of women and children. This must be supplemented by effective wrap-around support for the victims of domestic abuse.		March 2023
			Undertake a review of the Enforcement and Judicial System response to domestic abuse.		March 2023
			Assess and address local specialist provision for abusers in line with the RESPECT accreditation.	OPCC	March 2022
			Develop and embed a service user-led quality assurance approach to measuring victims' satisfaction with the support they receive.	VAWG/DA Lead	April 2022
			Create a single point of reference to ensure that intelligence and learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews are readily accessible and can be used to inform frontline practice, policy and commissioning direction.	Community Safety Partnership	April 2022

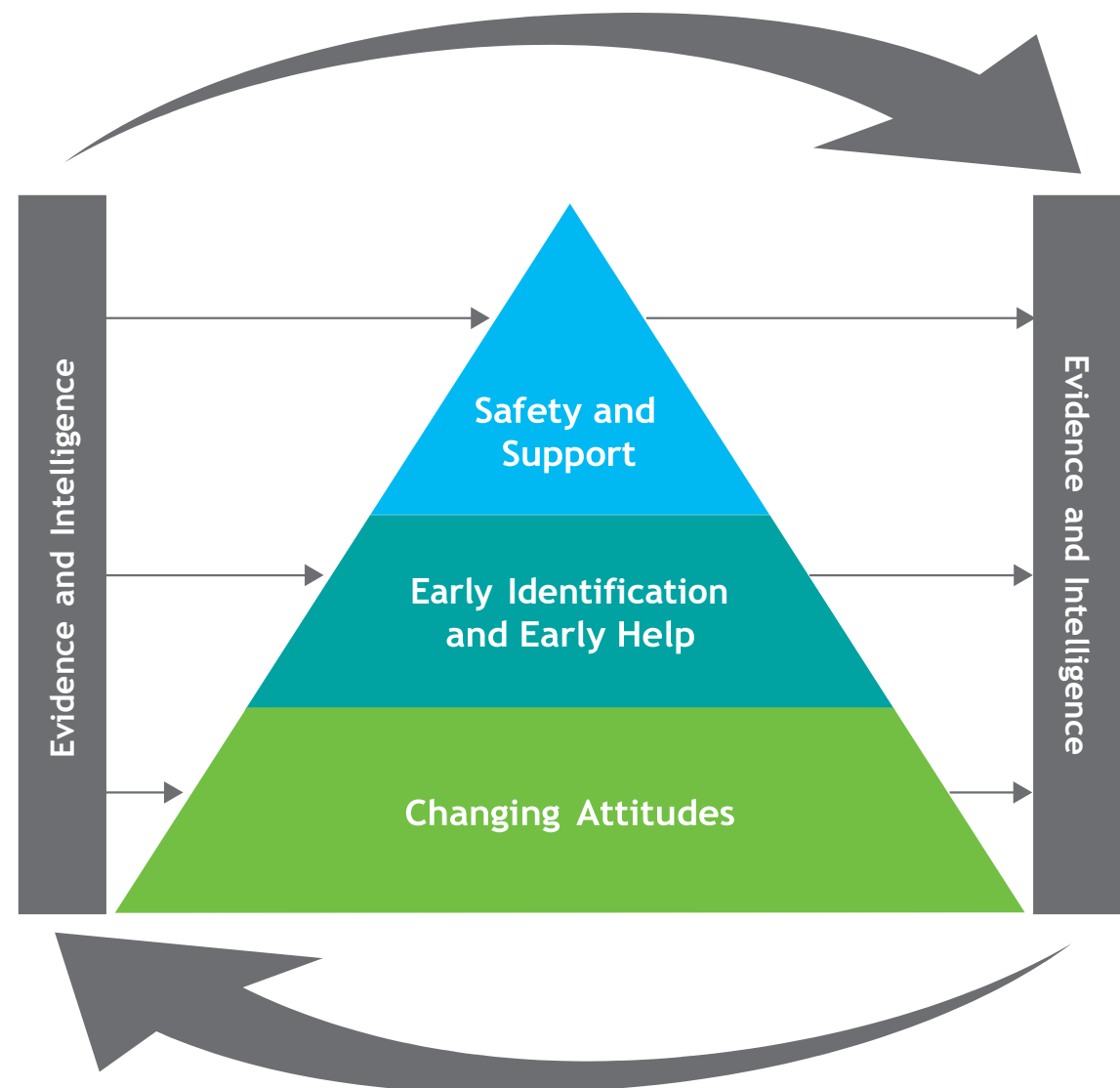
Evidence and Intelligence

There is a clear evidence and intelligence theme which underpins the whole system actions along with all three priority areas within the joint action plan.

To inform and drive continued improvement and innovation in tackling domestic abuse throughout the strategy period, we must ensure that collectively we have access to and utilise and learn from the best available evidence-base.

Birmingham is nationally recognised as a leader in the field of domestic abuse and as such we must ensure that the strength of local, practice-based evidence is recognised and considered alongside evidence-based practice.

The following diagram demonstrates the flow of evidence and intelligence into and out of the strategy model:



References

- ⁱ Domestic Abuse Needs Analysis Update 2016
- ⁱⁱ Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance Framework 2022
- ⁱⁱⁱ Domestic Abuse Needs Analysis Update 2016
- ^{iv} MARAC dataset (2017) Safe Lives (Accessed online 20.11.17)
- ^v Iris National report 2021
- ^{vi} Women's Aid Federation England (2013) Annual Survey
- ^{vii} Scott, S & McManus, S (DMSS Research for Agenda)(2016) Hidden Hurt, violence, abuse and disadvantage in the lives of women (Published online: Agenda, 2016)
- ^{viii} Howard, M and Skipp, A, (2015) Unequal, trapped and controlled. Women's experience of financial abuse and Universal Credit (London: Women's Aid and TUC, 2015)
- ^{ix} Scott, S & McManus, S (DMSS Research for Agenda) (2016) Hidden Hurt, violence, abuse and disadvantage in the lives of women (Published online: Agenda, 2016)
- ^x Department for Education (2016) Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges.

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