

# Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023

## [Executive summary](#)

Domestic abuse has been identified as a priority for Coventry, and is a key issue for Public Health, West Midlands Police, Community Safety and Safeguarding. Data from 2015/2016 showed a significantly higher rate of domestic abuse in Coventry compared with the rest of England, although similar to the West Midlands region. The annual cost of domestic abuse in Coventry is thought to be £34.8 million; human and emotional costs are estimated at an additional £60 million.

The Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023 addresses domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage. It recognises that domestic abuse can affect anyone, although women and children carry the highest burden. It highlights a number of groups that may have an increased risk of certain types of abuse and/or face barriers to accessing help and support. The following groups are identified as falling within these categories:

- Older people
- Adults with care and support needs, including disabled people
- Black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugees
- Men
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

The priorities of the strategy have been informed by engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including service users, young people, adults with care and support needs, domestic abuse service providers, other voluntary and community sector providers, West Midlands Police, Community Safety, health and social care, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group and education. They are based on the four Ps of the government's Contest counter terrorism strategy, the framework of which supports a systematic way of tackling issues requiring a multi-agency approach such as domestic abuse. The four Ps are Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue:

## Prepare

The development of a strong governance and service commissioning structure to provide high quality, equitable services that are shaped around the needs of victims at all levels of risk, and ensure that their voices are heard and responded to.

## Prevent

A long term approach to improve awareness, understanding and early identification of abuse at all levels of society. Victims will be empowered to report and staff will be given the skills and confidence to support them. Interventions tailored to victims with a range of needs will help to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse and minimise repeat victimisation.

## Protect

There will be effective information sharing and referral pathways between key agencies, breaking down organisational and cultural barriers to ensure victims of abuse are identified and protected. The safety of victims, and that of their children (where applicable), will be paramount. Victims will be supported to access safe and appropriate accommodation; and safeguarding procedures will be robustly implemented to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected, and that the voice of the child is always heard.

## Pursue

An approach centred on achieving justice and positive outcomes for victims, including reductions in offending. There will be better understanding of perpetrator risk to support the use of court and out of court disposals so that they are held accountable for their actions and appropriately supported to understand and change their offending behaviour.

The Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023 will be supported by an action plan, implemented and monitored by a multiagency group to ensure that our vision of protecting and empowering victims, and achieving a long-term reduction in incidents of domestic abuse is achieved.

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## Foreword

Domestic abuse happens every day. It not only affects the victim, but also the wider family and community; however, it still remains very much a “hidden crime.” We know that there can be stigma attached to reporting and that certain groups of people within our community face additional barriers to accessing services which could help and support them. In Coventry we spend approximately £34.8 million per year across the city on services that support victims as well as dealing with those who inflict the abuse.

Coventry’s vision is to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse. We want to help and support victims but we also want to change the behaviour of those who inflict the abuse, to break the cycle and reduce the likelihood of further incidents, either within an existing relationship or with a new partner. We are not just talking about violence, abuse can take many forms and there has been a lot of background research looking at the national, regional and local data, and consultation with affected groups and service providers which has driven the thinking behind the formation of the strategic priorities.

Domestic abuse is everyone’s business. We must engage members of the public to open up the discussion around domestic abuse to ensure that it no longer remains a hidden crime, and support public and third sector services to adopt a joined up approach in order to achieve better outcomes for those who need help.

## Definition of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a manifestation of one person (or persons) exerting power and control over another<sup>1</sup>. Domestic abuse is most commonly thought of as occurring between intimate adult partners, however it can feature in relationships between people as young as 13 or over 60; be perpetrated by children against their parents; and involve the wider family<sup>2</sup>.

Domestic abuse can encompass, but is not limited to the following components:<sup>3</sup>

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

This strategy uses the term domestic abuse rather than domestic violence or domestic violence and abuse to emphasise that this behaviour is not limited to physical violence.

## Coercive or controlling behaviour

In 2015 parliament introduced an offence of coercive or controlling behaviour. Examples of such behaviour may include isolating someone from their relatives and friends, repeatedly putting them down or taking control of their daily life (e.g. what they can wear and who they are allowed to see)<sup>3</sup>. It does not have to have a physical element.

It can be perpetrated by anyone aged 10 or over, unless the victim is a child aged under 16 and the perpetrator is 16 or over<sup>4</sup>. It may be poorly understood by authorities and not be recognised by the victim.

## Forced marriage and honour-based violence

Domestic abuse encompasses honour-based violence and forced marriage. Forced marriage is “a marriage conducted without the consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor”; and honour-based violence is “a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (2016) Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2016 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2016>

<sup>2</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2014) Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working.

<sup>3</sup> Home Office (2016) Domestic violence and abuse (2016) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

<sup>4</sup> Coercion and control: fighting against abuse hidden in relationships (2017) <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/may/20/coercion-and-control-fighting-against-the-abuse-hidden-in-relationships>

<sup>5</sup> The Crown Prosecution Service (2017). Honour based violence and forced marriage <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/honour-based-violence-and-forced-marriage>

## Scope of the strategy

This strategy is clear that women comprise the majority of victims of domestic abuse. However it recognises that men are also victims, both in mixed-sex and same-sex relationships, and that the male experience of domestic abuse is under-represented. Coventry has made the decision to develop a domestic abuse strategy rather than a violence against women and girls strategy to ensure an inclusive approach that addresses the differing needs of men and women as both victims and perpetrators.

This strategy will focus on domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also captured within the government definition of domestic abuse<sup>6</sup> and Coventry has done extensive work to tackle this issue through the commissioning of the 'Ending FGM in Coventry' service and the 'Petals' web app; therefore female genital mutilation is not addressed in this strategy.

Although the overlap with other so-called 'hidden crimes' such as child sexual exploitation and modern slavery is recognised, these are being addressed separately in Coventry and do not form part of this strategy.

Sexual violence can occur independently but is also recognised as an important component of domestic abuse. Coventry City Council has commissioned a sexual violence prevention programme for children and young people, and an intimate partner dating violence prevention programme for young people to address the issue of sexual violence; therefore it will not be discussed separately in this strategy.

## Strategic and political context

### National

A number of national sources have been drawn upon to inform this strategy.

The Government's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) 2016-2020 has committed to achieving ongoing reductions in the prevalence of domestic abuse by breaking the intergenerational cycle of abuse; giving greater attention to the risk of becoming a perpetrator; challenging attitudes and beliefs about abuse; and improving awareness among children and young people about healthy relationships<sup>7</sup>. Relationship education is to be made compulsory in primary schools, and sex and relationship education will be compulsory in secondary schools<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Home Office and AVA (2013) Information for local areas on the change to the definition of domestic violence and abuse [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> HM Government (2016) Ending violence against women and girls strategy 2016-2020 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vRB.PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF)

<sup>8</sup> Department for Education (2017) Schools to teach 21<sup>st</sup> century relationships and sex education <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-to-teach-21st-century-relationships-and-sex-education>

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has developed [guidance](#) on multi-agency working to highlight the need for co-ordinated partnership working at operational and strategic levels, along with training and organisational support<sup>9</sup>.

The strategy is also informed by the second joint targeted area inspection programme, “The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse”, which recognises the long-term harmful consequences on children and young people who are victims or witnesses of domestic abuse<sup>10</sup>.

### Local and regional

This strategy does not sit in isolation. There are a number of local and regional strategies and guidance that have informed the strategy and will impact on how we work with our partners to deliver its priorities.

Coventry’s Council Plan, which sets out the vision and priorities for the city, has highlighted domestic abuse as a key area of focus<sup>11</sup>.

Coventry’s Parenting Strategy 2018-2023 recognises domestic abuse, mental illness and substance misuse as significant issues for some parents in Coventry, which impact on their children.

Coventry’s [Drug and Alcohol Strategy](#) 2018-2023 will tackle substance misuse in the city, supporting this strategy’s vision to reduce and prevent domestic abuse<sup>12</sup>.

Work is taking place locally to develop links between the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the subsequent housing and homelessness strategy, acknowledging that domestic abuse is a significant cause of homelessness.

Coventry’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy has a focus on reducing violence, sexual abuse and the risk of individuals developing multiple complex needs<sup>13</sup>; and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlights the issue of domestic abuse in Coventry<sup>14</sup>.

The West Midlands Domestic and Abuse Violence Standards provide a framework for statutory and specialist domestic abuse services to improve and commission services, and develop professional practice<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2014) Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50>

<sup>10</sup> The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse (2017) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/645642/JTAI\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_1\\_8\\_Sept\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645642/JTAI_domestic_abuse_1_8_Sept_2017.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Coventry City Council (2017) 2017/2018 half-year performance report - April to September 2017

<sup>12</sup> Coventry Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017-2020 <http://modern.gov.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s34900/Coventry%20Drug%20and%20Alcohol%20Strategy%202017-2020%20-%20Appendix%202.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Coventry health and wellbeing strategy 2016-2020 [file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/Coventry\\_Health\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_Strategy\\_2016\\_19\\_NEW%20\(4\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/Coventry_Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2016_19_NEW%20(4).pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Coventry joint strategic needs assessment 2016 [file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/JSNA\\_2016\\_All\\_Sections\\_V3%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/JSNA_2016_All_Sections_V3%20(2).pdf)

<sup>15</sup> West Midlands domestic violence and abuse standards (2015) <http://violencepreventionalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WM-DV-standards.pdf>

Regionally, West Midlands Police and the [Police and Crime Commissioner](#) have made the identification and prevention of domestic abuse a strategic priority.

## [National picture](#)

Domestic abuse is known to be under-reported therefore the following figures represent only part of the picture.

### [Prevalence of domestic abuse](#)

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending March 2017) an estimated 1.9 million adults aged 16-59 years had experienced domestic abuse (defined as non-sexual partner abuse, non-sexual family abuse, sexual assault or stalking) in the previous year (1.2 million women and 713,000 men)<sup>16</sup>.

For both men and women, the most common type of domestic abuse was partner abuse, specifically non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking<sup>16</sup>.

The 16-19 year age group made up the highest proportion of victims of domestic abuse for men and women (combined data from 2014 to 2017)<sup>16</sup>.

### [Domestic abuse-related crime](#)

Police in England and Wales recorded 1.1 million domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2017. 43% were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes, 57% remained as incidents. Domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police accounted for 32% of violent crimes<sup>16</sup>.

There were 46 arrests for every 100 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by 39 police forces in the year ending June 2017. A decision to charge was made in 72% of domestic abuse-related cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service by the police; and of those that proceeded to court 76% resulted in convictions<sup>16</sup>.

### [Domestic homicides](#)

Between April 2013 and March 2016 454 domestic homicides were recorded by the police in England and Wales; 70% of the victims were female. More than three-quarters of female victims were killed by a male partner or ex-partner. Of the male victims, two-thirds were killed by another male<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Office for National Statistics (2017) Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#main-points>



## Coercive and controlling behaviour

4246 offences of coercive control were recorded in the year ending March 2017 across the 38 police forces for which these data were available<sup>16</sup>.

## Repeat victimisation

Repeat victimisation in domestic abuse is poorly captured in the Crime Survey for England and Wales as many people either do not respond to the question or reply that they do not know. Data from the year ending 2015 survey show that 15% of people experienced two episodes of victimisation and 16% experienced at least three episodes<sup>17</sup>. Women are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than men<sup>18</sup>.

## The health impacts of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is associated with an increased risk of mental health problems, including depression and anxiety; a greater use of mental health services; and an increased likelihood of self-harm or suicide<sup>15</sup>. Substance abuse (misuse of alcohol and/or drugs) may co-exist with mental health problems and is independently associated with domestic abuse<sup>19</sup>.

Domestic abuse can cause both long and short-term impacts on physical health including, injuries such as bruising and broken bones; pregnancy complications such as miscarriage and stillbirth; and onset or exacerbation of chronic conditions such as migraines<sup>20</sup>.

## The cost of domestic abuse

The cost of domestic abuse to public services in England and Wales is an estimated £3.856 billion per year<sup>21</sup>. Local government's annual contribution to this figure is about £479 million.

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<sup>17</sup> Office for National Statistics (2016) Intimate personal violence and partner abuse <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse#partner-abuse-repeat-victimisation>

<sup>18</sup> Office for National Statistics and Home Office (2010) Homicides, firearm offences and intimate violence 2008/09: supplementary volume 2 to crime in England and Wales 2008/09 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100408175211/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb0110snr.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> AVA (n.d.) Complicated matters: a toolkit addressing domestic and sexual violence, substance misuse and mental health. AVA toolkit <https://avaproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Complicated-Matters-A-toolkit-addressing-domestic-and-sexual-violence-substance-use-and-mental-ill-health.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Domestic abuse and your physical health (2015) <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/domestic-abuse-and-your-physical-health/>

<sup>21</sup> Local Government Association and Safer Portsmouth Partnership (n.d.) The cost of domestic abuse: the financial cost to Local Government <http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10965/LGA%20Costs%20of%20Domestic%20Abuse%20ANON.pdf>

## Honour-based violence and forced marriage

Although honour-based violence and forced marriage are considered under the definition of domestic abuse, they are distinct from other forms of abuse in that they are driven by a desire to maintain perceived cultural norms and traditions, and that failure to do so would 'dishonour' the family<sup>22</sup>. That said, honour-based violence and forced marriage are not exclusive to any religion, culture or society<sup>22</sup>.

### Prevalence of forced marriage

The Forced Marriage Unit in the UK provided support or advice to approximately 1400 cases in relation to a possible forced marriage (i.e. those at risk of a forced marriage, in the process of being forced into marriage, or already in a forced marriage) in 2016<sup>23</sup>. The majority of cases involved female victims (80%); the remaining 20% were male. More than one-third (35%) of victims were 18-25 years old; slightly over one-quarter were aged under-18<sup>23</sup>. In 2% of cases the victim identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender which may be an underestimate as these data are not collected routinely. In 10% of cases the victim had a learning disability<sup>23</sup>.

### Prevalence of honour-based violence

In 2010 at least 2800 cases of honour-based violence (including beatings, acid attacks, mutilation and murder) were reported to the police in the UK<sup>24</sup>. Between 2010 and 2014 29 honour-based murders or attempted murders in the UK were reported in the media; the majority of victims were female<sup>22</sup>. These figures are likely to be underestimated as incidents of this nature are known to be underreported and may not consistently be categorised as honour-based violence by the police or other public bodies.

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<sup>22</sup> Criminal Justice Inspectorates (2015) The depths of dishonour  
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/the-depths-of-dishonour.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Forced Marriage Unit Statistics (2016)  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/597869/Forced\\_Marriage\\_Unit\\_statistics-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/597869/Forced_Marriage_Unit_statistics-2016.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Nearly 3000 cases of honour based violence every year in the UK <http://ikwro.org.uk/2011/12/nearly-3000-cases-of-honour-violence-every-year-in-the-uk/>

## Regional and local picture

In 2016 Coventry was estimated to have a population of 352,900<sup>25</sup>. The average age was 33 and is decreasing, which has implications for the burden of domestic abuse in the city.

### Prevalence of domestic abuse

Data from 2015/2016 showed a significantly higher rate of domestic abuse in Coventry compared with the rest of England, although similar to the West Midlands region<sup>26</sup>. For this reason domestic abuse has been identified as a priority by the Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board.

Data from the West Midlands Police between April 2016 and July 2017 show that there were 8022 calls in Coventry to West Midlands Police that were initially classified as domestic abuse. Over the same period 2763 incidents were later categorised as domestic abuse crimes and 4287 as non-crime\* domestic abuse incidents. Women were victims of domestic abuse crimes five times more often than men: 2189 crimes had female victims compared with 419 with a male victim. The average age of victims was 26 years old. Children were involved in or witnessed 1133 crime incidents and 1757 non-crime incidents.

### Prevalence of honour-based violence and forced marriage

Data from the West Midlands Police Strategic Intelligence Development Team show that there were 55 honour-based violence and forced marriage offences in Coventry in 2014 which represents 9% of all such offences across the West Midlands<sup>27</sup>. In 2010 the West Midlands was ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst area behind London for honour based violence with 378 incidents reported to the police<sup>24,24</sup>.

85% of victims in the West Midlands are described as being of 'Asian origin' but due to poor data collection it is unclear exactly how this was defined<sup>27</sup>.

Almost one-third of the incidents recorded by police in Coventry took place in the wards of St Michael's and Foleshill, both of which are areas of high deprivation<sup>28,29</sup>. According to the 2011 Census Foleshill has the highest Asian/Asian British population in the city<sup>29</sup> and St Michael's has a higher proportion of student residents compared with the rest of the city<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Insight, Coventry City Council (2017) Coventry's Population Estimate 2016

[file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/Coventry\\_s\\_Population\\_Estimate\\_2016\\_v2.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/Coventry_s_Population_Estimate_2016_v2.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Public Health England (n.d.) Domestic abuse – public health profiles

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/domestic%20abuse>

\* Non-crime incidents are those where there is no evidence of a criminal offence being committed but that may be a precursor to criminal behaviour (e.g. coercive control), and recording of the incident would be desirable for future follow-up.

<sup>27</sup> West Midlands Police Strategic Intelligence Development Team (2015). Honour based violence and forced marriage problem profile

<sup>28</sup> Corporate Research (2011) St Michael's Ward Profile.

<sup>29</sup> Corporate Research (2011) Foleshill Ward Profile.

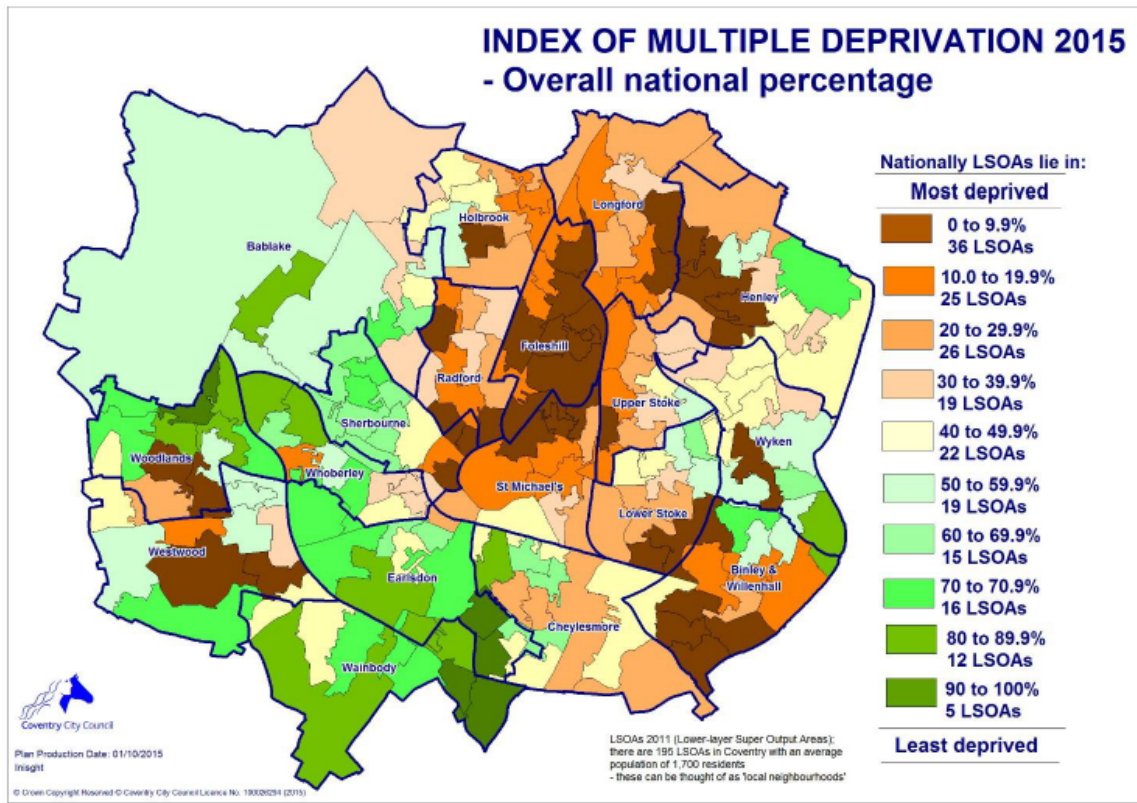


Figure 2. Index of Multiple Deprivation map of Coventry<sup>30</sup>

### Financial impact of domestic abuse

The annual cost of domestic abuse in Coventry is estimated to be £34.8 million. This includes physical and mental health costs of £10.4m; social services costs of £1.7m; combined criminal justice and civil legal costs of £9.9m; housing and refuge costs of £1.2m; and £11.6m through lost economic output. Human and emotional costs are estimated at £60 million<sup>31</sup>. These estimates have been made using the 2009 British Crime Survey for a population of 16-59 year olds, therefore the actual costs may be higher.

<sup>30</sup> Coventry City Council (n.d.) English indices of deprivation reports  
[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/17734/english\\_indices\\_of\\_deprivation\\_2015\\_-\\_coventry\\_infographic](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/17734/english_indices_of_deprivation_2015_-_coventry_infographic)

<sup>31</sup> Walby (2009) The cost of domestic violence: update. Costs have been pro-rated for Coventry.

## Who is affected?

Domestic abuse affects men and women; people of all sexual orientations; all religions and ethnicities; and individuals of all ages. It is also the case that some relationships are mutually abusive therefore individuals of both genders may be both a victim and a perpetrator.

That said, evidence shows that the majority of victims are female<sup>16</sup>. Domestic abuse experienced by women is distinct from that experienced by men. Domestic abuse perpetrated by men against women is a gendered crime rooted in gender inequality and the position of women and the family in society<sup>32</sup>. Women are more likely than men to be the victim of domestic homicide<sup>16</sup> and are more likely to be subjected to repeat victimisation<sup>33</sup>. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending 2017) showed that women were more likely than men to have experienced multiple forms of abuse in the previous year<sup>16</sup>. For some women, pregnancy or having recently given birth is a risk factor for domestic abuse<sup>9</sup>. Women and girls are predominantly affected by forced marriage and honour-based violence compared with males<sup>34</sup>.

In families where domestic abuse occurs it is important to remember that children and young people are also victims. They are sometimes referred to as secondary victims<sup>35</sup> which risks minimising the significant detrimental impact that domestic abuse has on their health, wellbeing, behaviour and education<sup>36</sup>; and does not acknowledge that they too may be abused. In relationships where domestic abuse is a factor, children are thought to witness approximately two-thirds of incidents<sup>36</sup>; and approximately 50% of these children have themselves been subjected to physical abuse<sup>36</sup>. Domestic abuse is also known to be strongly associated with child neglect<sup>37</sup>. Witnessing domestic abuse increases the likelihood of a child or young person becoming a perpetrator or being subjected to domestic abuse as an adult<sup>36</sup>. Children and young people may face barriers to seeking help for domestic abuse. These include<sup>38</sup>: protectiveness of the non-abusing parent, loyalty to the perpetrator, fear of the consequences, and fear of being taken into care. Additional barriers identified by local service providers in Coventry include age, with children under 18 months being particularly

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<sup>32</sup> Women's Aid (2015) Domestic abuse is a gendered crime [https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-is-a-gendered-crime/#\\_ednref2](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-is-a-gendered-crime/#_ednref2)

<sup>33</sup> Office for National Statistics and Home Office (2010) Homicides, firearm offences and intimate violence 2008/09: supplementary volume 2 to crime in England and Wales 2008/09 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100408175211/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb0110snr.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Criminal Justice Inspectorates (2015) The depths of dishonour <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/the-depths-of-dishonour.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Victims of crime (n.d.) <http://victimsofcrime.com.au/domestic-violence-exposure/>

<sup>36</sup> Royal College of Psychiatrists (2017) Domestic violence and abuse – its effects on children: the impact on children and adolescents: information for parents, carers and anyone who works with young people. <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/parentscarers/domesticviolence.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> Parenting and domestic violence (n.d.) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/268836/n7\\_parenting\\_and\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268836/n7_parenting_and_domestic_violence.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board and Safe Newcastle (n.d.) Safeguarding children abused through domestic violence - practice guidance (barriers to disclosure, enabling disclosure) <https://www.nscb.org.uk/sites/default/files/Safeguarding%20Children%20DV%20Guidance%20disclosure.pdf>

at risk and unable to communicate their experience; and one or both parents encouraging their child to keep the abuse a secret.

### Under-represented groups

Individuals from certain groups may face additional barriers to accessing services. Some of these barriers may be specific to particular groups while some are common across all. Some of these groups - namely older people, adults with care and support needs, and black, Asian, other ethnic minorities and refugees – have increased vulnerability to certain types of domestic abuse.

<b>Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee</b>	<p>Women from black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee backgrounds are at an increased risk of specific forms of domestic abuse such as honour-based violence and forced marriage<sup>39</sup>.</p> <p>Women from ethnic and religious minorities are more likely to under-report domestic violence and abuse; and migrants and asylum seekers are less likely to be aware of available support services<sup>40</sup>.</p> <p>They face potential barriers to reporting that are associated with their cultural background and/or immigration status including<sup>41</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protecting family honour</li><li>• Normalising and accepting the abuse</li><li>• A language barrier</li><li>• Dependency on the abuser(s) to remain in the UK</li><li>• A lack of recourse to public funds.</li></ul>
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<sup>39</sup> Penny(2015) Supporting B&ME victims – what the data shows (blog) Safe Lives [http://safelives.org.uk/practice\\_blog/supporting-bme-victims-%E2%80%93-what-data-shows](http://safelives.org.uk/practice_blog/supporting-bme-victims-%E2%80%93-what-data-shows)

<sup>40</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) How fair is Britain? The First Triennial Review Executive Summary [file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/tr\\_execsumm.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Cvnat445/Downloads/tr_execsumm.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Gill and Banga (2008) Black, minority ethnic and refugee women, domestic violence and access to housing (2008). Race Equality Foundation <http://www.better-housing.org.uk/briefings/black-minority-ethnic-and-refugee-women-domestic-violence-and-access-housing>

<p><b>Adults with care and support needs including disabled people</b></p>	<p>Disabled people, including those with an intellectual impairment, are more likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled people<sup>42,43</sup>.</p> <p>Potential barriers to accessing services include<sup>44</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to leave without assistance</li> <li>• Feelings of shame and that the abuse was their fault</li> <li>• Preferring to stay with an abusive partner than enter the care system</li> <li>• Feeling that they should be grateful for the care they receive from their abuser.</li> <li>• Lack of accessible information about support services</li> <li>• Lack of services tailored to their needs</li> </ul> <p>Individuals suffering from dementia may become violent towards their partner. They are also more vulnerable to certain types of abuse, such as <a href="#">financial abuse</a>, by their carer<sup>45</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Older people</b></p>	<p>Older people may be more at risk of neglect and financial abuse compared with psychological, physical and sexual abuse<sup>46</sup>.</p> <p>They may face the following barriers to accessing services<sup>47,48</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dependence on others</li> <li>• failure to recognise the situation as abusive</li> </ul>

<sup>42</sup> Office for National Statistics (2016) Intimate personal violence and abuse <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse>

<sup>43</sup> Hughes et al (2012) Prevalence and risk of violence against adults with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies [abstract only] Volume 379, no. 9826, p1621-1629

<sup>44</sup> Hague et al. (2007) Making the links – Disabled women and domestic violence <http://www.equation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/EQ-LIB-127.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Alzheimer’s Society (2011) Short changed: protecting people with dementia from financial abuse [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1296/short\\_changed\\_-\\_protecting\\_people\\_with\\_dementia\\_from\\_financial\\_abuse.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1296/short_changed_-_protecting_people_with_dementia_from_financial_abuse.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> O’Keefe et al. (2007) UK study of abuse and neglect of older people. Prevalence survey report. National Centre for Social Research and King’s College London. <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/308684/p2512-uk-elder-abuse-final-for-circulation.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Safe Lives (2016) Spotlights Report #Hidden Victims. Safe later lives: older people and domestic abuse. <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Later%20Lives%20-%20Older%20people%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> Mahmud (2016) It’s our right to be safe at any age. How can we make it easier for older victims to get help (blog) Safe Lives [http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice\\_blog/its-our-right-be-safe-any-age-how-can-we-make-it-easier-older-victims-get-help](http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice_blog/its-our-right-be-safe-any-age-how-can-we-make-it-easier-older-victims-get-help)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lack of awareness of services</li> <li>• previous lack of support from friends, family or services.</li> </ul>
<b>Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender</b>	<p>Potential barriers to service access include<sup>49</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of homophobia</li> <li>• Not identifying with the experience of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Believing that services are designed around heterosexual relationship models, and therefore don't cater to them</li> <li>• Concerns about being 'outed'</li> </ul>
<b>Men</b>	<p>Men are less likely than women to report experience of domestic abuse for a number of reasons, including<sup>50,51</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identifying with society's portrayal of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Fear of being separated from their children and concern for their welfare</li> <li>• Love of their partner and commitment to the relationship</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> </ul>

Table 1. Illustrates the barriers certain groups may face to accessing services; and the risk of some groups to particular types of domestic abuse.

<sup>49</sup> Safe Lives (2015) Practice briefing for Idvas - engaging and working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) clients. <http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/LGBT%20practice%20briefing%20for%20Idvas%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Dempsey (2013) Men's experience of domestic abuse in Scotland <http://www.abusedmeninscotland.org/Final%20What%20We%20Know%20LitRev%20June%202013.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Hogan (2016) Men's experiences of female-perpetrated intimate partner violence: a qualitative exploration (2016) DCounsPsych, University of the West of England. <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/28618>



## Coventry domestic abuse services

### Service provision

Since 2014 domestic abuse services have been commissioned in Coventry to provide:

- A helpline
- A single point of access
- Community-based victim casework
- Victim aftercare support
- Security installations
- Supported accommodation;
- A domestic abuse perpetrator service
- Services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

The services include specialist provision for black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee individuals; victims of honour-based violence and forced marriage; children; disabled people; and men. In addition to the commissioned provision a range of other organisations support victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

### Service use data

#### Commissioned services

The table below shows the commissioned domestic abuse services data from 2016/2017.

Accommodation service	<p><b>131 service users started support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% were female</li> <li>• 43% were aged 18-24 years</li> <li>• 98% were heterosexual</li> <li>• 67% were White British (based on data available)</li> <li>• 47 service users were from outside Coventry City Council</li> <li>• Emotional (130), mental (129) and verbal (127) abuse were the top three types of abuse reported.</li> </ul>
Perpetrator service	<p><b>271 people were referred for support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% of referrals came from social care</li> <li>• 93% were male</li> </ul> <p><b>195 service users received support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% were aged 25-34 years</li> <li>• 98% were heterosexual</li> <li>• 58% were White British (based on data available)</li> <li>• 12% were disabled</li> <li>• Verbal (197), physical (158) and emotional/psychological (91) abuse were the top three types of abuse reported.</li> </ul>
Community-based support	<p><b>472 people were accepted for support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97% were female (based on data available)</li> <li>• 16% were disabled</li> <li>• 99% were heterosexual</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65% were White British</li> <li>• The top three most common sources of referral were self (93), other (81) and police (64).</li> </ul>
Children's services	<p><b>183 children received support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53% were male</li> <li>• 66% were aged 5-11 years</li> <li>• 57% were White British</li> </ul>

#### Non-commissioned services

Significant provision of domestic abuse services in Coventry comes from a non-commissioned service that provides support to women and children. In 2016/2017 1548 women and 3405 children were supported.

Refuge services	<p><b>New referrals accepted into refuge services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 women</li> <li>• 35 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing service users:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 women</li> <li>• 18 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethnicity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% were White British</li> </ul>
Outreach, advice and advocacy service	<p><b>1276 new women were supported:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 655 accessed the service for case work and emotional support</li> <li>• 621 women called the helpline for telephone support</li> <li>• 215 women attended activity based groups across the city</li> <li>• 115 women accessed the counselling service</li> </ul>
Independent domestic violence advisor service	<p><b>167 high risk victims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% had multiple and complex needs</li> </ul>
Forced marriage and honour-based abuse service	<p><b>25 women supported around forced marriage:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 76% were black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee</li><li>• Most were aged 22-30 years</li></ul> <p><b>147 women supported around honour-based violence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 79% black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee</li><li>• Most were aged 31-40 years</li></ul>
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## Consultation & Engagement

In the preparation of this strategy, Coventry City Council and partners conducted consultation as well as a needs analysis to enable the strategy to be structured around the affected population and focus on the right areas.

Professionals from a wide range of disciplines (including community safety, domestic abuse service providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, West Midlands Police, general practice, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, and Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group) came together to discuss the proposed priority areas, identify potential gaps and suggest how these could be addressed in the strategy. Their thoughts and ideas have been incorporated into this document.

Service users, members of the public, and statutory and voluntary stakeholders were also invited to complete surveys to identify the priorities that were most important to them.

Targeted engagement took place with young people aged 15-18, through the Positive Youth Foundation by convening a focus group; and adults with care and support needs were surveyed through Grapevine. The engagement process focused on exploring what individuals in these groups understood about domestic abuse and their attitudes towards seeking help. Guidance from the Alzheimer's Society was also sought in relation to domestic abuse and dementia and they highlighted the complex problems that can arise for those responsible for their care with regards to domestic abuse.

## Governance

The strategy has been developed by the Domestic Abuse Working Group which reports to the Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board. The working group comprises membership from West Midlands Police, Community Safety, Public Health and Insight, Commissioning (adults and children), Coventry and Rugby clinical commissioning group (safeguarding), Children's Social Care and Regulatory Services.

The Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board hold overall responsibility for the strategy. The Working Group has links to the Operational Group, which comprises local providers; the Coventry Health and Wellbeing Board; Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board; and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Implementation of the strategy is supported by an action plan, the development of which will be informed by the named groups and further stakeholder consultation.

The Domestic Abuse Working Group will transition into a Steering Group, and will monitor the implementation of the action plan and lead commissioning of future domestic abuse services in Coventry.

## Strategic priorities

The priority areas for the strategy have been derived from data, consultation with stakeholders, including service users, and national and regional policies, strategies and guidance.

The strategy model is based on the four Ps Contest model: Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue. Contest is the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It is a well-established systematic approach to capturing key areas of concern for issues that require a multi-agency response and can therefore be appropriately applied to domestic abuse. Using this approach ensures that whilst there are four distinct strands which each have their own goals, each strand interlinks and supports working towards a common goal.

### Prepare

#### Why this is important

##### *Governance and effective partnership working*

Domestic abuse is a priority for the West Midlands Police, Public Health, Safeguarding and Community Safety. Close working between these agencies and other key partners is necessary for a cohesive and effective response to this issue.

##### *Provide high quality and equitable services*

Coventry City Council has committed to the West Midlands Domestic Violence and Abuse Standards which support the delivery of safe, effective and evidence-based care and support; and outline the expected minimum standards of care<sup>15</sup>.

Service planning and commissioning must be supported by robust data collection to ensure that the needs of the local community are met. This should include the identification of victims from under-represented and vulnerable groups. In 2017 a service audit identified a gap in funding for language support and interpreters in accommodation services, as well as a need for an increase in black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee specific accommodation in Coventry.

##### *Effective utilisation of resources*

Needs-led commissioning will help to avoid duplicating services and wasting money.

### Outcomes

Statutory organisations and specialist services will provide safe and effective support that is responsive to the needs of victims and allows their story to be heard. Services will work closely in partnership to ensure that victims do not have to tell their story more than once. Services will be underpinned by robust, visible governance structures to ensure clear

management, accountability and responsibility, including during periods of change and uncertainty.

Improved data collection by local and regional services in contact with victims and perpetrators to ensure that service provision is shaped by the needs of victims and is able to identify and respond to emerging trends. This should include identifying under-represented groups and those who may be more vulnerable to certain types of abuse, to help address barriers to service access.

Services will support victims at all levels of risk. This should include those with complex needs to ensure that factors that may impact on the victim's vulnerability to and effect of domestic abuse are addressed.

### How we will achieve the outcomes

Through robust commissioning, governance and provider accountability we will ensure the development of domestic abuse services adherent to the West Midlands Domestic Violence and Abuse Standards and the recommendations of the joint targeted area inspection. The commissioning process will be informed by engagement with victims so that services reflect their needs. Commissioners and service providers will work together to develop tools to facilitate accurate data collection.

We will explore options for service mapping and carrying out a service evaluation, including a review of the point of access model, to inform future service development.

We will explore the development of referral pathways between service providers and key services, where they do not already exist, to support victims and perpetrators to access additional services.

As part of our commissioning strategy we will consider cross-boundary commissioning of specialist services where local need may not justify a local service.



## Prevent

### Why this is important

#### *Break the cycle*

Witnessing domestic abuse can have devastating long-term effects on children and young people, and increases the risk of creating an intergenerational cycle of abuse<sup>36</sup>. Families affected by domestic abuse may have other complex needs<sup>2</sup> including parental mental health problems, substance misuse, housing or debt problems, offending or anti-social behaviour, poor or inconsistent parenting<sup>52</sup>. Addressing these may help to break the intergenerational cycle<sup>7</sup>.

Data suggest that almost one-third of victims suffer repeat victimisation, although this is likely to be an underestimate<sup>53</sup>. Prevention is important to help stop people getting trapped in a repeating pattern of abuse.

Honour-based violence and forced marriage are driven by the belief that certain behaviours are 'dishonourable' as they are in opposition with perceived religious or cultural traditions<sup>22</sup>. Challenging such beliefs is important to preventative efforts.

#### *Early identification and intervention*

Coercive and controlling behaviour are central to domestic abuse but are poorly understood and may be hard to identify, including by the victim and the perpetrator<sup>4</sup>.

Victims of domestic abuse may not present to specialist services. Their first point of contact may be the police or a health care professional, among others; and it may take several contacts before disclosure. Surveys of adults with care and support needs indicated that they would seek help from the police, friends, a carer or relatives before they would go to a specialist service.

Domestic abuse is underreported therefore prevention requires focus on identifying perpetrators, as well as victims, and supporting them to change their behaviour.

Early identification supports the development of long-term interventions to prevent domestic abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage, and a shift away from a crisis management approach.

The Early Intervention Service in Coventry for children and young people, supports the early identification of young people's unhealthy relationships which are often typified by coercive and violent behaviour. Many of the behaviours are considered precursors to domestic abuse, therefore the service has a preventative function. Service data showed that 47% of

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<sup>52</sup> Commissioning for families with complex needs (n.d.)

[https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/CIB\\_Commissioning\\_for\\_families\\_with\\_complex\\_needs\\_Final\\_version.pdf](https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/CIB_Commissioning_for_families_with_complex_needs_Final_version.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Office for National Statistics (2016) Intimate personal violence and partner abuse

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse#partner-abuse-repeat-victimisation>

178 service users in 2016/2017 were identified as being engaged in unhealthy relationship behaviours.

Some groups face particular barriers to accessing support. A lack of information about available services and understanding of domestic abuse may contribute to this. A focus group with young people indicated a lack of awareness of services; and surveys with adults with care and support needs found a need for more information about domestic abuse.

### *Raise awareness*

Domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage, is everybody's business. Successful prevention requires awareness and understanding of domestic abuse at all levels of society.

## Outcomes

Frontline staff will consider the needs of the whole family when addressing domestic abuse; and families will be supported by early intervention initiatives in Coventry such as the Early Intervention Service, the Family Nurse Partnership and Family Hubs, which may help to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse.

Frontline staff will be able to identify possible signs of victimisation, including evidence of controlling and coercive behaviour and seemingly isolated incidents as part of a pattern of abuse; and intervene early enough through information-giving, signposting and/or referral as appropriate to prevent repeat victimisation.

Up to date guidance on referrals and interventions for domestic abuse that reflect changes in practice and process.

Frontline staff will be able to identify suspected perpetrators and know where to seek further information and advice to ensure that they receive appropriate support to change their behaviour and improve outcomes for victims.

Improved public understanding of domestic abuse (including coercive and controlling behaviour, honour-based violence and forced marriage), who it affects, and the needs of groups who may face additional barriers to accessing services and/or have increased vulnerability to certain types of abuse, to enable individuals to recognise when they or others may be a victim.

Children and young people will have improved understanding of domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage, recognising it has no place in healthy intimate or family relationships.

Victims will have the confidence to report abuse early and seek help to prevent further incidents.

Parents will be able to recognise the signs that their child may be a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse and know where to seek help to ensure that they receive the necessary support to prevent further abuse and/or achieve behaviour change.



Attitudes towards honour-based violence and forced marriage are challenged to increase understanding that they have no cultural or religious justification, and encourage victims and potential victims to seek help.

#### How we will achieve the outcomes

We will develop a tiered core competency framework outlining the minimum knowledge and skills requirements for staff in contact with adults and children affected by domestic abuse, to support a holistic, needs-led approach that enables their complex needs to be addressed. This will reinforce expected standards of care for victims of domestic abuse. We will also ensure the dissemination of information to local services about domestic abuse services in Coventry.

We will engage with the staff in the Family Hubs to explore ways in which they can be supported to achieve sustainable change for families.

The Early Intervention Service will review school lesson plans, and ensure that teachers are suitably trained to deliver relationship education. We will engage with voluntary and community sector organisations that work with children and young people, schools, colleges and universities, to increase knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage among children and young people; and explore the possibility of peer-led education delivered by individuals with lived experience of these crimes.

The Early Intervention Service will educate parents and carers to identify the early signs of unhealthy relationships between young people. We will explore the need for other methods of improving parental education on domestic abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage to support them to recognise where their own children may be affected.

We will ensure that commissioned service providers maintain up to date guidance on referrals and interventions for domestic abuse that are up to date and reflect changes in practice and process.

We will explore methods of engagement with faith and cultural leaders to challenge the beliefs that give rise to forced marriage and honour-based violence.

We will engage with voluntary, community and faith organisations that support groups who may face additional barriers to accessing services.

We will explore ways to engage with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce to improve employer awareness and understanding of domestic abuse.

We will develop a communications strategy to improve awareness and understanding of, and encourage conversations around domestic abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage among all groups in society. The strategy will challenge misconceptions, increase understanding of abusive behaviour, including coercive and controlling behaviour, and highlight the needs of groups that may face additional barriers to accessing services or be at risk of particular forms of domestic abuse.

# Protect

## Why it is important

### *Information-sharing*

Appropriate information-sharing between agencies is required to ensure that victims receive the most appropriate intervention, and to protect them (and their children where relevant) from ongoing harm. However, it presents ethical and legislative challenges, resulting in a lack of clarity about how information should be shared<sup>54</sup>. The General Data Protection Requirement was approved and adopted by the UK and will come into force in May 2018<sup>55</sup>. Its aim is to strengthen safeguards for all citizens from privacy and data breaches<sup>56</sup>. Section 29 of the Data Protection Act currently provides an exemption to data processing rules for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders<sup>55</sup>. The General Data Protection Requirement will also allow data processing for the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences<sup>55</sup>.

As of February 2018 schools in Coventry have been receiving information about domestic abuse incidents involving their pupils (as witnesses or victims) directly from the police through Operation Encompass.

Information sharing processes should be as simple and clear as possible, ensuring that the victim's safety (and that of anyone else potentially at risk) forms the basis of any decisions. An example of an existing system that works on this premise is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme which allows the police to disclose information about an individual to protect someone from domestic abuse; and for a third party to seek information from the police regarding an individual they are concerned about who has a history of abusive behaviour<sup>57</sup>. Another example is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which brings together agencies (the police, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors [IDVAs], health, child safeguarding, housing practitioners, probation and other practitioners from the statutory and voluntary sectors) to share information about high risk cases of domestic abuse to inform safety planning.

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<sup>54</sup> Department of Health (2011) Striking the balance: Practical Guidance on the application of Caldicott Guardian principles to domestic violence and MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/215064/dh\\_133594.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215064/dh_133594.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> MacRoberts LLP (n.d.) The Data Protection Act, the GDPR and the UK Data Protection Bill <https://www.macroberts.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/GDPR.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.eugdpr.org/>

<sup>57</sup> Home Office (2016) Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) guidance [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575361/DVDS\\_guidance\\_FINAL\\_v3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575361/DVDS_guidance_FINAL_v3.pdf)

### *Access to appropriate and safe accommodation*

Domestic abuse is a common cause of homelessness. In 2016/2017 in Coventry violent breakdown of a relationship was one of the top three reasons for homelessness, accounting for 11% of cases.

In England the majority of referrals to refuge accommodation are from local authorities different to the one in which the service is based<sup>58</sup>.

Transitioning from a refuge to long-term accommodation may create difficulties due to eligibility for and prioritisation of social housing (e.g. for out of area residents)<sup>59</sup>. It must also be considered that some victims prefer to remain in their homes, and should be supported to do so safely if they choose to.

Accommodation needs vary between victims, and may be driven by factors including gender, culture, religion and sexual orientation.

### *Ensure that people know where to seek help*

A lack of awareness of services and how to access them may act as a barrier to seeking help for domestic abuse. A focus group with young people found that they were not aware of the services available and were reluctant to seek help from professionals, preferring to speak to those with experience of domestic abuse.

### *Safeguarding*

The 2017 joint targeted area inspection for domestic abuse (carried out in six areas across the country) found that agencies did not always adequately address the needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse; particularly services supporting their parents<sup>10</sup>.

A significant proportion of adults requiring safeguarding do so as a result of domestic abuse<sup>60</sup>.

Exposure of children to domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue and professionals are duty-bound to refer to children's services. Failure to appropriately acknowledge the experience of children risks both short- and long-term negative impacts on their health and wellbeing<sup>10</sup>.

Silo working of key agencies means that adult's and children's safeguarding needs are not always recognised in relation to domestic abuse<sup>10</sup>.

## Outcomes

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<sup>58</sup>Department for Communities and Local Government (2014) Supplementary guidance on domestic abuse and homelessness  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/545312/Supplementary\\_guidance\\_on\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_and\\_homelessness.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545312/Supplementary_guidance_on_domestic_abuse_and_homelessness.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2017) Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse – consultation  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/655655/Domestic\\_Abuse\\_consultation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655655/Domestic_Abuse_consultation.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Local Government Association and Directors of Adults Social Services (2015) Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pdf>

Individuals within key agencies will be able to identify the circumstances in which it is appropriate to share data; and know who to seek advice from when in doubt to ensure that victim's needs are not overlooked.

Strong channels of communication will exist between schools and West Midlands Police to ensure that pupils in homes where domestic abuse has taken place are identified and supported appropriately.

Victims of domestic abuse who are considering leaving or have decided to leave their home will be supported to do so; and will receive appropriate support to maintain their safety after leaving.

Victims of domestic abuse, including for those who are not residents of Coventry, will have 24 hour support to access emergency accommodation appropriate for their needs and circumstances. Provision of emergency accommodation for the identified vulnerable groups will be driven by need, based on local data.

Victims ready to transition from refuges to settled accommodation will be treated as high priority for social housing; and those who wish to remain in their own homes will be supported to do so.

Increased public awareness and knowledge, including among young people and adults with care and support needs, about the national and local domestic abuse services available and how to contact them.

Professionals supporting victims will ensure the implementation of the appropriate safeguarding procedures for adults and children; and ensure the child's story is heard.

### How we will achieve the outcomes

Existing information sharing agreements between agencies, health settings in particular, will be reviewed in light of the General Data Protection Requirement. Where inter- or intra-agency data sharing protocols or tools do not already exist these will be developed to support decision-making on how and when data should be shared. Commissioned domestic abuse services will be required to have a named information governance lead who can advise on information-sharing.

Schools will ensure an identified member of staff (a Key Adult) is appropriately trained to liaise with the police, utilise the information shared with them in confidence, and respond to children's needs as part of Operation Encompass<sup>61</sup>. Schools will ensure that parents are informed about the initiative.

Domestic abuse services will ensure that there is a safety plan in place for victims who are taking steps to leave their home, or who have recently left their home; and that this is reviewed on a regular basis.

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<sup>61</sup> Operation Encompass (n.d.) <http://www.operationencompass.org/>

Domestic abuse services, housing and other key agencies will work in partnership to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to appropriate housing. We will explore options to assess the demand for emergency accommodation so that service provision is informed by need.

We will ensure that domestic abuse services support the prevention and relief of homelessness and align with the Housing Options services put in place to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, including advice and support for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, alongside effective referral pathways.

A communications strategy will be developed to improve public awareness, including among young people, of local and national domestic abuse services and knowledge of how to seek help. This will include the identification of appropriate communication channels and settings (e.g. youth centres, workplaces, cultural centres) to ensure that under-represented groups are reached. Alongside this we will explore the development of a victim information pack to ensure that victims have an awareness and understanding of the services and support available to them.

Locally commissioned domestic abuse services will be required to maintain an up-to-date website and publicity material with contact details of local and national services which will be accessible to those who do not speak English as a first language or who may require easy-read materials.

We will explore the provision of peer-led support for young people who experience or witness domestic abuse including honour-based violence or forced marriage.

Development of clear safeguarding policies for adults and children by agencies supporting victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse; and a named contact within agencies to advise and support staff to ensure appropriate implementation.

Close partnership working between key agencies to ensure that children's needs are addressed in all cases.

## Pursue

### Why it is important

#### *Ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and are supported to change their behaviour*

In managing incidents of domestic abuse it is important for professionals to address the behaviour of the perpetrator, as well as the needs of the victim. Failure to do so risks overlooking the underlying causes of the abusive behaviour, and implementing short-term interventions in the absence of long-term strategies to prevent ongoing abuse<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Manage risk and ensure that victims are supported early to reduce risk*

Victims should be supported at the earliest appropriate opportunity to reduce risk of ongoing abuse. This should focus on court and out of court opportunities to address offending behaviour and achieve long-term behaviour change.

### Outcomes

Perpetrators will receive appropriate support to understand and change their behaviour, and address the complex needs that may contribute to their actions, with the aim of achieving positive outcomes for the victim including reductions in offending behaviour

Professionals in contact with perpetrators will have an understanding of and be able to recognise coercive and controlling behaviour.

Perpetrators will be managed robustly but sensitively to achieve justice for victims and ensure that they feel supported and able to continue reporting incidents.

### How we will achieve the outcomes

We will work to better understand the needs of perpetrators and the pathways in place to support them; as well as the dynamic nature of risk and how this influences the interventions used to manage them (e.g. actions alongside criminal justice such as removals to prevent breach of the peace, domestic violence protection notices and orders, and civil orders).

We will develop effective referral pathways and information sharing agreements to support them, working effectively with the police and probation service to understand how the wider partnership can support activity to achieve criminal justice.

We will explore options for service mapping and the evaluation of the effectiveness of services that are in contact with perpetrators, victims and families to determine the outcomes of services and inform commissioning.

## Delivery

This strategy is supported by an action plan that will be implemented and monitored by the Domestic Abuse Steering Group to ensure that the strategy achieves its aims of protecting and empowering victims, and reducing domestic abuse in Coventry.

## Prepare

- Ensure that there is strong governance and accountability in place for the operation of the strategy and delivery of the action plan.
- Ensure that there are robust procurement, commissioning and monitoring procedures in place for all City Council commissioned services connected with domestic abuse.
- Achieve consistent data collection & recording.
- Carry out service mapping and explore the evaluation of existing services.
- Establish referral pathways between services and key agencies where they do not already exist.

## Prevent

- Develop a clear core competency framework which defines the knowledge and skills required for frontline staff working in commissioned and non-commissioned services (e.g. general practice, teachers) to help them identify and support possible victims and perpetrators.
- Make information more accessible to professionals and the public.
- Ensure guidance on referrals and interventions for domestic abuse are up to date.
- Take a holistic approach to abuse, tackling root causes and addressing how it affects the wider family and community.
- Engage with educational institutions, and voluntary and community sector organisations that support children and young people to increase their knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse; and support schools to deliver appropriate relationship education.
- Embed IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) in GP practices.
- Engage with the business community increase awareness of and address the impact of domestic abuse on their workforce.
- Engage with faith and community leaders, and relevant organisations regarding domestic abuse, including forced marriage and honour based violence.
- Work with corporate communications to develop a plan around launching the strategy and the ongoing delivery of consistent messages.
- Support parents to identify the early signs that their child may be a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse.

## Protect

- Review data sharing in light of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation in 2018.
- Ensure needs-led provision of and access to safe accommodation in the short and long term.

- Ensure that schools are informed of domestic abuse incidents involving their pupils through Operation Encompass.
- Emphasise staff training and awareness of safeguarding issues in the context of domestic abuse in all city council commissioned services; and ensure that safeguarding is a key part of the tendering process.
- Ensure strong and effective leadership processes around the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.
- Consider development of a victim information pack.
- Ensure that agencies supporting victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse have clear safeguarding policies in place for adults and children.
- Provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to support victims of abuse.

#### Pursue

- Develop a clear understanding of the dynamic nature of risk and need to share critical information in a timely manner.
- Perpetrator programmes to help break the cycle of abuse and reduce re-offending.
- Hold abusers to account whether through the criminal justice system or community-based programmes.
- Explore the evaluation of perpetrator programmes to determine whether they have been successful, taking the learning forward to inform future service commissioning.



## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all the members of the Domestic Abuse Working Group for their hard work in developing this strategy; and to the service users, members of the public, domestic abuse service providers, wider stakeholders and council colleagues who provided their knowledge and expertise to help inform its priorities. Thank you also to Voluntary Action Coventry, Positive Youth Foundation, Grapevine and the Alzheimer's Society for their support in carrying out the engagement work for this strategy.

DRAFT

## Appendices

### Draft high level action plan

#### Prepare:

- Oversight and accountability for delivery of the action plan by the Police & Crime Board.
- Assessment of robust and visible governance structures during the tender process when commissioning services.
- Procurement and monitoring processes to ensure compliance with the West Midlands Domestic Violence and Abuse Standards for all commissioned services.
- Develop an effective information sharing agreements and have clearly defined referral pathways for service providers.
- Develop a core competency framework that defines knowledge and skills requirements of staff engaged in service delivery. Exploration of suitable training options.
- Commissioners and providers work together to achieve consistent data collection by agreeing common data and reporting standards.
- Ensuring equitable service provision by ensuring the needs of under-represented groups and those who may be more vulnerable to certain types of abuse are accounted for in the service specification. Developing needs led services.
- Explore the evaluation of existing services to inform future commissioning decisions.
- Engage with colleagues regionally and explore cross boundary commissioning.

#### Prevent:

- Develop a core competency framework that defines knowledge and skills requirements of staff who may encounter adults and children at risk.
- Explore the possibility of developing online information (e.g. an App) easily accessible to professionals to raise awareness of the services available. Part of the commissioning process for services should include an obligation to make stakeholders aware of their offering.  
Early identification & intervention of those at risk or who are experiencing abuse for example using IRIS in GP practices.
- Breaking the cycle of abuse within families by specifying that commissioned services take a “holistic approach.”
- Explore method of engagement with faith leaders around honour based violence.
- Explore ways to engage with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce to improve employer awareness and understanding of domestic abuse.
- Work with colleagues in Corporate Communications to develop a launch of the strategy and associated promotion on social media (and other channels) to raise awareness particularly for those in identified under-represented groups or who may be more vulnerable to certain types of abuse.

#### Protect:

- Review current information-sharing across agencies in light of the new General Data Protection Requirement. Commissioning process should include the need to identify a named information governance lead within a service.
- Provide access to safe accommodation by strengthening links between providers of refuge accommodation, frontline staff responding to reports of domestic abuse as well as the provision of emergency housing within the City Council. Accommodation provision should be needs led.
- Service commissioning process to include a requirement for services to publicise their availability, particularly amongst those under-represented groups who may find it more difficult to access advice.
- Commissioning process to include a check that services have safeguarding procedures in place and that staff are trained to recognise safeguarding issues. Contract monitoring of commissioned services should include staff training records as well as effective operation of the safeguarding policies.
- Strong and effective leadership regarding the operation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes to ensure safeguarding is effective throughout the city.
- Services commissioned to include the provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) to victims of abuse.

#### Pursue:

- Enabling police to investigate (by clear referral pathways and information sharing) and gather evidence so that perpetrators are held accountable by using criminal justice routes where appropriate.
- Accessing the needs of the whole family when assessing risk and making sure that agencies are working together to manage risks and put the right support around the family.
- Supporting perpetrators to change their behaviour by the use of perpetrator programmes. Exploring options for the evaluation of these programmes and whether those that need programmes have access to it. Accessing whether current programmes are fit for purpose.

## Coventry City Council domestic abuse needs analysis

August 2017

### Introduction

#### Purpose

This domestic abuse needs analysis is intended to provide an evidence base to inform the development of a domestic abuse strategy for Coventry.

#### Scope

The DA needs analysis covers:

- **service scoping (supply) –**
  - what services do we currently commission?
  - what are they meant to provide (service specifications)?
- **usage (met demand) –**
  - who accesses domestic abuse services?
    - ...for those experiencing/who experienced domestic abuse ['victims']; and
    - ...for those who access perpetrator services
    - ...by protected characteristics under the Equality Act (e.g. by age, by gender, by ethnicity, by disability, by sexual orientation)
- **crime and non-crime data (unmet demand) –**
  - what are the city's overall trends in domestic abuse?
  - ...by protected characteristics under the Equality Act (e.g. by age, by gender, by ethnicity, by disability, by sexual orientation)
  - how many are repeat incidents?
  - how many involve children?

### Service scoping

#### What services do we currently commission?

Coventry's current domestic abuse services commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014. It replaced former contracts; and demonstrated the Council's commitment to stop domestic abuse as set out in the Council Plan. The current contract is for a period of four years and includes a single point of access service which aims to provide a 'one-stop' contact point for victims of domestic abuse.

The contract consists of elements, each providing a specific service:

- helpline/single point of access and victim community-based support;
- victim supported accommodation;
- children and young people's service; and
- a perpetrator service.

#### What are the services commissioned to provide?

The intention is that the services deliver an integrated multi-agency model, together, the Coventry Domestic Violence and Abuse Support Services (CDVASS):

### **1. Helpline, interactive website and victim community based services:**

A single Coventry helpline to provide support and information for victims, perpetrators, children and young people and professionals, providing a single point of access to all victim services and can explain and support access to children's and perpetrator services; support to victims living in the community including emotional support, support at court, support with property security and signposting to other specialist services; a support service to victims from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities; and a peer support service for victims including support groups, workshops and opportunities to meet other people in similar situations.

### **2. Supported accommodation for victims and children:**

Accommodation includes a mix of furnished self-contained and shared individual and family accommodation; women-only accommodation with separate units for male victims; accommodation adapted for physical and sensory impairments and for carers; provision for pets in self-contained units.

Support includes: comprehensive individual risk and need assessments; comprehensive safety and practical and emotional support planning; individual one to one case work and group support sessions; multilingual staff and culturally specific support including forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence and female genital mutilation; signposting to other relevant specialist services; and 24/7 emergency referrals.

### **3. Children and young people service:**

Support for children and young people in Coventry up to the age of 18 who are affected by domestic abuse in the home include: support to children who are most at risk of harm; one to one and group support; support to enable children and young people to talk about their experiences, increase their confidence and improve their safety; support and advocacy for children and young people who are involved with the legal system.

Note: children experiencing domestic abuse at home, parents and carers and professionals should speak to the child's social worker or CAF (Common Assessment Framework) key worker to make a referral. Alternatively the CDVASS Helpline can advise on how to access the service.

### **4. Perpetrator service:**

Delivery of the Brighter Futures Perpetrator Programme – a ten-week long programme that can be delivered on either an individual or group basis to male and female perpetrators aged 16 years and over.

The programme works by increasing self-efficiency; self-esteem; providing an insight into problem behaviours and their impact on others; emotion regulation skills; problem solving skills; and taking personal responsibility for problematic relationship behaviours.

Referrals can be made via the single point of access helpline; or alternatively, police, probation and social care will have direct referral routes.

## [Crime and non-crime data](#)

### [Domestic abuse in Coventry](#)

Data from the West Midlands Police show that there were **5,771 incidents of domestic abuse** recorded between April 2016 and March 2017. This is a **reduction of 201 incidents (-3.4%)** from the same time period in 2015/16. These included both crime and non-crime incidents.

Data on domestic abuse trends by protected characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators / victims were not available.

### Domestic abuse involving children

According to the West Midlands Police data from April 2016 to March 2017, **53%** of domestic abuse cases involved children. That is an **increase of 15.8%** from the same period during 2015/16. Exposure to adverse childhood experiences like domestic abuse impacts on future violence, victimisation or perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunities.

### Police response to domestic abuse incidents

Between April 2016 and July 2017 in Coventry there were 8022 calls to West Midlands Police that were classified initially as domestic abuse; 127 of these were not attended by the police. A sample of 10 of these calls showed that this was for a variety of reasons including: the alleged perpetrator leaving of their own accord, the police were no longer required, responsibility for the incident being handed over to another agency or individual (in one case the husband of a learning disabled women whose husband reportedly had been threatening her). The data indicate that the lack of police presence does not necessarily mean that a risk assessment had not been carried out.

### Preventing domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is everybody's business – it is important to recognise that domestic abuse has an impact on the lives of the victims, the offenders, the children, and the community and that often, suffering is hidden from view.

This year saw a significant decrease in the number of repeat incidents of domestic violence – 291 between April 2016 and March 2017 compared to 565 over the same period in 2015/16. 6.7% were repeat victims; with the repeat incident rate falling from 9.5% in 2015/16 to 6.7% in 2016/17.

While overall domestic abuse figures remained stable (falling by 3.4% although the significant of this is not clear) the decrease in the repeat incidents is thought to be a positive impact from improvements in the support provided by police and partner agencies; and management of repeat offenders – reducing repeat victimisation.

### Addressing sexual violence

The Council have commissioned a sexual violence prevention programme. This is intended to raise awareness and educate young people about sexual violence, appropriate behaviour, and consent. It is being delivered to children, young people, teachers and parents in schools and youth groups. Further work is underway to develop an intimate partner violence prevention programme alongside this.

### Service usage

#### Helpline/single point of access and victim community-based support

From April 2015 to September 2016, the service dealt with 4,338 calls (including referrals from professionals, advice, helpline, etc.) – giving an average of 2,892 calls per year.

From April 2015 to December 2016 (seven quarters), the service accepted 872 referrals – giving an average of 498 per year. The vast majority (96.7%) of referrals are female.

### Victim supported accommodation

The service provided support to 221 people over the seven quarters from April 2015 to December 2016, that is, an average of 126 per year. The vast majority of people (98.2%) are female. The most common age range of people supported is 18-34; making up 70.1% of those supported. Location data is available on 57% of people supported – with most referrals from the wards of Foleshill, Henley, Radford and Lower Stoke. However, we do not have location data for 43% of referrals.

### Children and young people's service

Between April 2015 and December 2016 the service received an average of 111 new referrals every year, and supported, on average, 273 children / young people. The majority were supported on a short-term basis of around 0-3 months or 3-6 months; and only a small proportion (9%) of service users were supported for more than six months. Of the 163 cases that were closed, the majority (58%) were because work with the child / young person had been completed within the quarter for which there was data.

Three-year data (with no double counting) are available for the numbers of individual children who received support (assessments and interventions, and partial support) from children's services. This totalled **280** over three years, increasing each year.

Year	Number of children receiving support
2014/2015	86
2015/2016	88
2016/2017	106

### Perpetrator service

On average, 238 perpetrators began support each year – an average of 182 perpetrators were on the programme every year, and 72 completed the programme. The vast majority (93.6%) of perpetrators accessing the service are male – mostly aged 25-34 (44%); or 35-44 (29%). The majority commit either verbal (31%) or physical abuse (29%) – note that some may commit more than one form of abuse. Of the 262 perpetrators accessing the service between April 2015 and September 2016, the most common postcode was CV6 (32%) followed by CV2 (21%) and CV3 (18%).

### Si Chun Lam

Interim Insight Manager (Intelligence)

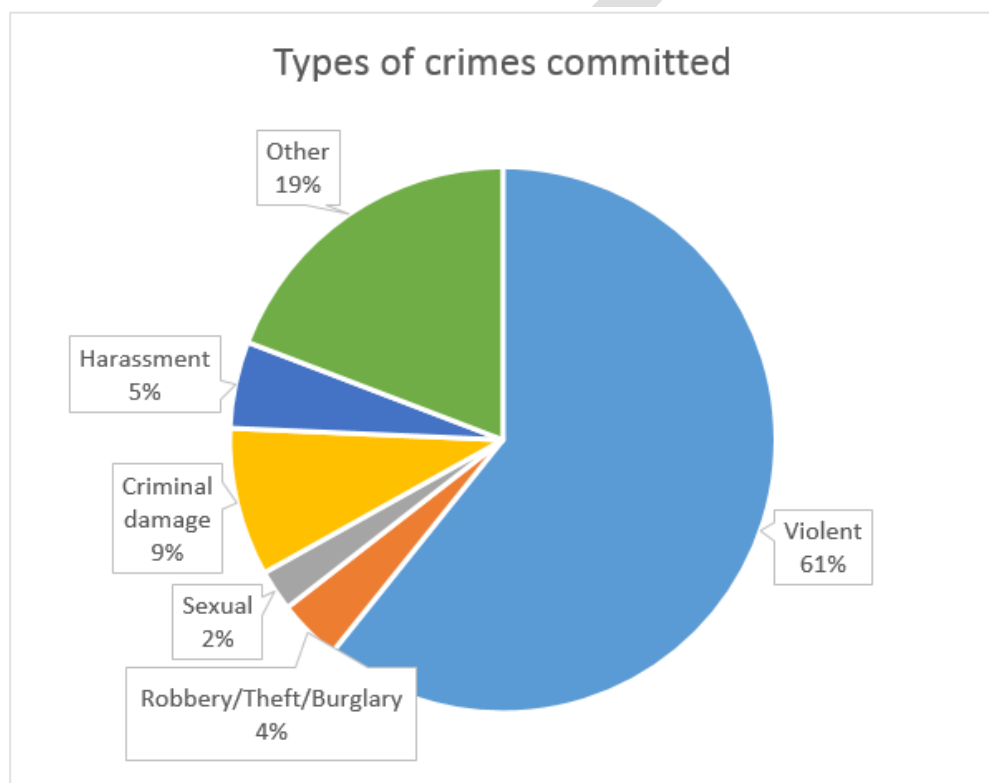
Coventry City Council

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## West Midlands Police data analysis

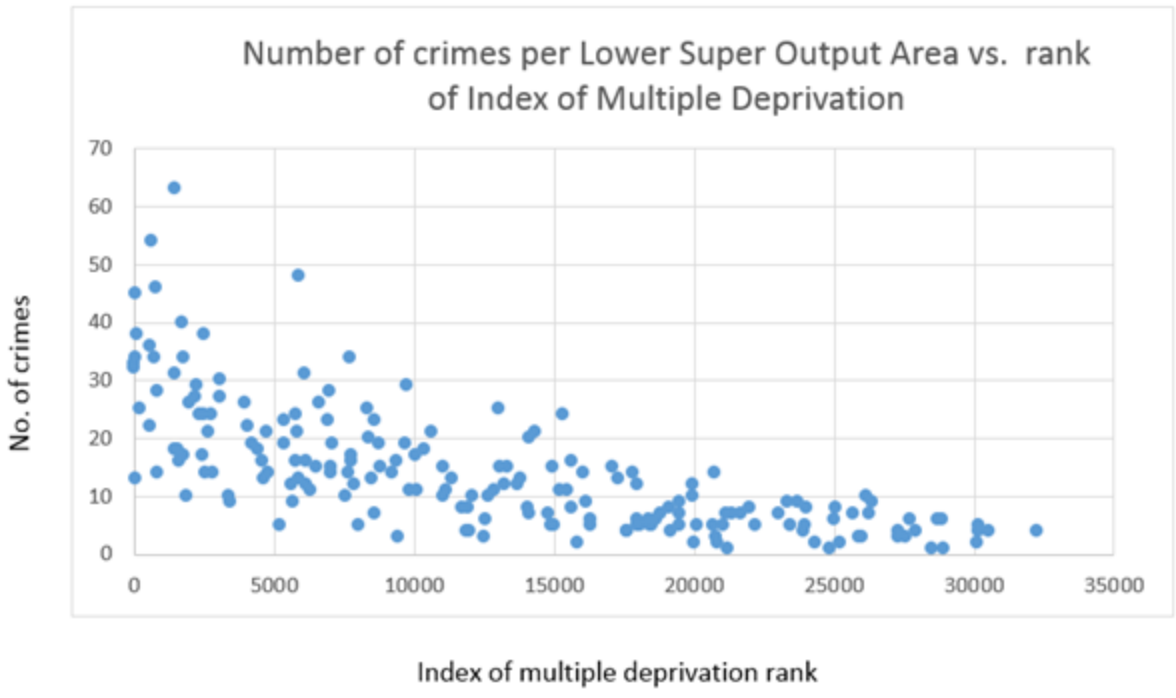
In depth data from April 2016 to July 2017 were provided by West Midlands Police. These included details on the types of crimes committed, the victim's gender and age, and the postcode in which the incident took place.

Data analysis showed that the most common types of domestic abuse crimes that took place in Coventry during that period were violent.

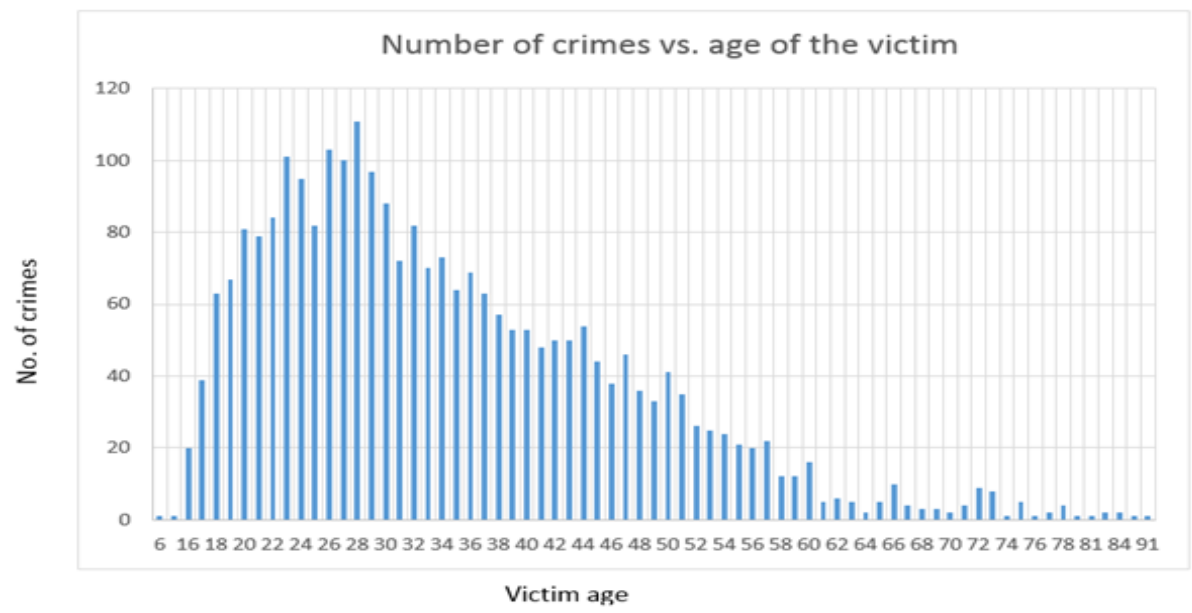


Higher numbers of domestic abuse crimes occurred in areas with higher levels of deprivation.





Domestic abuse crimes more commonly involved individuals of younger ages; the median age of a victim was 26 years old.



## Governance and reporting structure



The Domestic Abuse strategy is owned and managed by with the Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board.

The working group that has led the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy has now become the Coventry Domestic Abuse Steering Group. The steering group reports to the Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board on progress against the strategy. The board is jointly chaired by Community Safety (Craig Hickin) and Public Health (Liz Gaulton).

The membership of the steering group includes representatives from:

- Public Health
- Insight
- Community Safety
- West Midlands Police
- Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group
- Social Care
- Regulatory Services
- Commissioning

The steering group will be responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of an action plan to achieve the aims of the strategy, and lead the commissioning of future domestic abuse services. Progress will be shared with the Safeguarding Boards and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## Consultation and engagement

### Co-design event

A co-design event, led by Voluntary Action Coventry, was held on 14/11/17 with a wide range of statutory and voluntary partners (including community safety, domestic violence and abuse providers, other voluntary and community sector providers, West Midlands Police, general practice, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, and Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group) who discussed the four priority areas and provided details on where they felt there were gaps and how the strategy should address them. Some of the key issues raised include:

- Coercive control should be a central part of the strategy.
- A tiered core competency framework should be developed to ensure that frontline staff can identify and respond appropriately to domestic violence and abuse.
- Information sharing between agencies requires clear protocols.
- Acknowledgement of young people as both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse in the strategy.
- Whether a domestic abuse strategy, and not a violence against women and girls strategy is the right approach.
- Acknowledgement of sexual violence as an aspect of domestic abuse in the strategy.
- What does and doesn't work well with the current single point of access service model and whether it meets the needs of men.
- Consideration of the support available to individuals pursuing civil litigation which is currently means tested.
- That a full needs assessment should have been carried out before work on the strategy was started.

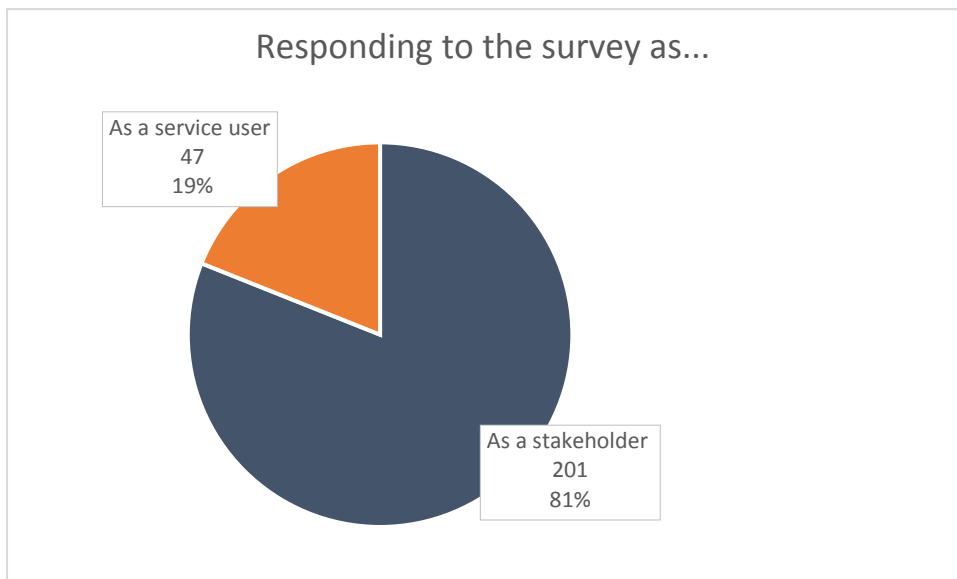
### General Survey

#### Domestic abuse stakeholder survey

Domestic abuse can be described as behaviour that involves one person having control over another. This behaviour may happen once or several times over months or even years. It happens between partners (i.e. boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands and wives) or family members who are aged 16 or older. People of any gender or sexuality can be affected. The abuse may be:

- Psychological (mental)
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Honour based violence
- Forced marriage

A total of 248 people responded to the survey, of which 47 are service users and 201 other stakeholders (service providers, commissioners, councillors etc.). Further details on the respondents are below .



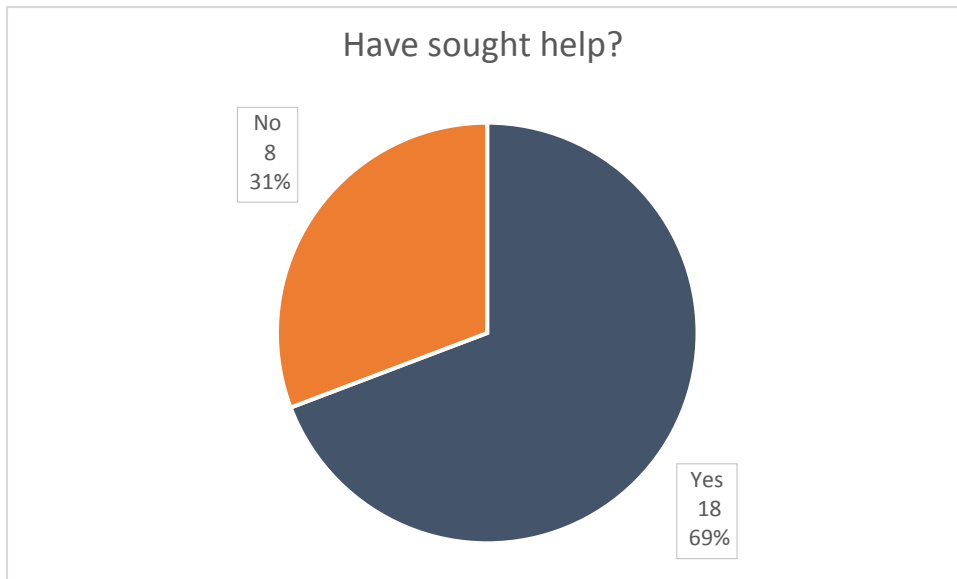
### Service users

Of the 47 service users who responded to this survey, 27 reported that they experienced domestic violence and abuse. None of them committed domestic violence and abuse.

I have...	
Experienced domestic violence and abuse	27
Committed domestic violence and abuse	0
Skipped question	20

Of the 27 respondents who have experienced domestic violence and abuse 18 have sought help and 8 have not sought help.

Have you sought help?	
Yes	18
No	8
Skipped question	1



### Sought help

Of the 18 who sought help and support, 16 stated where they have sought help:

Help sought	Responses
Support from West Midlands Police	7
Support from a Coventry domestic violence and abuse service	6
Support from your GP/practice nurse	6
Other (for example a friend, relative, carer)	5
Support from a domestic violence and abuse service outside Coventry.	3
Support from another health or social care provider (e.g. a sexual health clinic)	5
Support from school/college/university in Coventry	0

The three most common sources of help were West Midlands Police, a Coventry Domestic Violence and Abuse Service, and the GP/practice nurse.

5 respondents highlighted that they also sought help from and family and friends and from Women's Aid outside Coventry.

Other support points	Count
Friends and Family	4
Women's Aid (outside Coventry)	1

Coventry Haven was highlighted as a service that users frequently sought help from; Sahil project has been highlighted in the other services section.

Answer Choices	Responses
<b>Coventry Haven</b> (support and accommodation for women and children)	6
<b>Refuge</b> (telephone helpline and website providing information and support)	3
<b>Safe and Supported Partnership</b> (accommodation, information and support)	2
Other (please name them) <b>Sahil project</b>	1

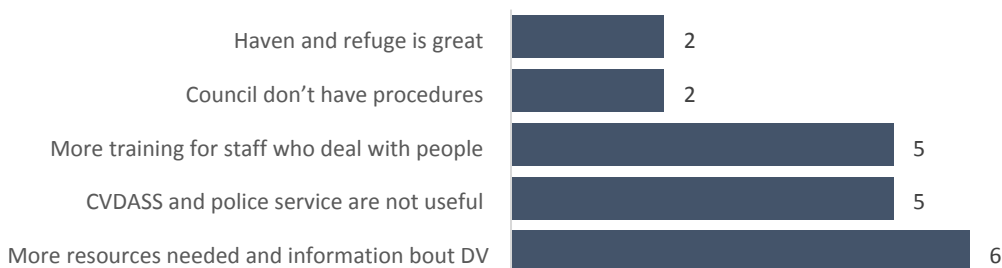
### Have not sought help

For those who have not sought help (8 respondents out of 27 service users), the table below shows that the most prominent reason for not reporting or seeking help is the lack of awareness of domestic abuse and what it means. It is also worth highlighting that people are not afraid to seek help and are willing to seek help if they are aware of the issue and the help available to them.

Reasons for not seeking help	Count
Did not realise it was domestic abuse at the time	4
Embarrassment	2
I did not know where to seek help	1
Different times and level of awareness	1
I was too afraid to seek help	0
I did not want to seek help	0

From those who sought help and accessed the domestic abuse services they said that there is little or no information available to inform people about the services. Service users felt that the police and commissioned services could improve engagement with victims and would benefit from more knowledge. On the other hand those who made contact with Haven said that the service was very good. Refuge, which is part of the commissioned domestic abuse services, was also commented on positively.

### What worked well and what could be improved in DV services



23 respondents identified their service priorities for the strategy. The table below shows that raising awareness about where and how to receive support was the most important priority area, but the rest of the priorities followed closely behind and as such there is no clear trend that can be identified.

Priority	count
It is important that people who experience domestic violence and abuse know where to find help.	21
It is important that services offer appropriate support to people at all levels of risk (low, medium and high).	20
It is important that services work in partnership to make sure that people who experience domestic violence and abuse don't have to tell their story more than once.	19
It is important that the short-term and long-term housing needs of people who experience domestic violence and abuse are addressed.	19
It is important to increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse among children and young people.	18
It is important that people with additional needs (e.g. a mental health condition, drug and alcohol problems) who experience domestic violence and abuse are offered appropriate support.	17
It is important that people who may find it hard to access services (e.g. disabled people; people who don't speak English; people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) are appropriately supported to do so.	17
It is important that people who carry out domestic violence and abuse are held responsible for their actions.	17
It is important that services work in partnership to make sure that people who experience or carry out domestic violence and abuse are referred or signposted appropriately.	16
It is important that staff working with the public (e.g. GPs, teachers) can spot the signs of domestic violence and abuse (including honour-based violence and forced marriage).	16
It is important that relevant services share data to protect people experiencing domestic violence and abuse (and their children where relevant).	16
It is important that children and young people who live in homes with domestic violence and abuse are protected from harm.	16
It is important that services consider the needs of the whole family to try to break the cycle of abuse that can continue between generations.	15
It is important that cultural attitudes and religious beliefs that give rise to honour-based violence and forced marriage are challenged.	15
It is important to increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse among staff in local services, community and faith groups, and members of the public.	15
It is important that services supporting people who experience and carry out domestic violence and abuse collect data (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) to make sure that services meet the needs of the local population.	15
It is important that people who carry out domestic violence and abuse are supported to help change their behaviour.	15

People were invited to provide additional comments about what the strategy should consider. These included the importance of responding appropriately to complaints; recognising repeat offenders; understanding the underlying reasons behind domestic abuse; ensuring that children feel they will

be believed; making an appropriate assessment of risk; providing support based on need and not finances (i.e. one service user felt that decisions around their support were influenced by finances).

### Equalities

#### What is your age?

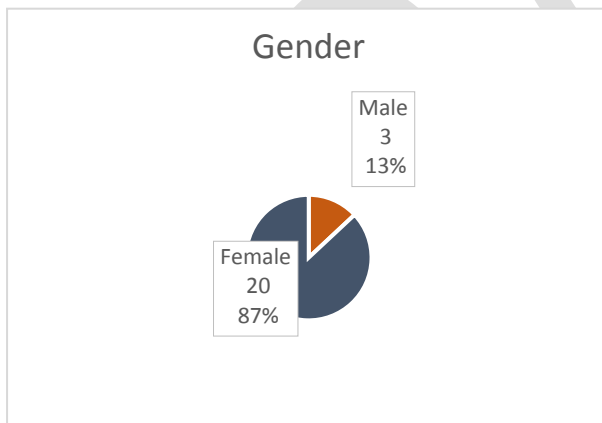
23 responded out of a possible 47 service users responded.

Age groups	Count
16-24	0
25-34	4
35-44	3
45-54	8
55-64	5
65+	3

#### Gender

23 responded out of a possible 47 service users responded.

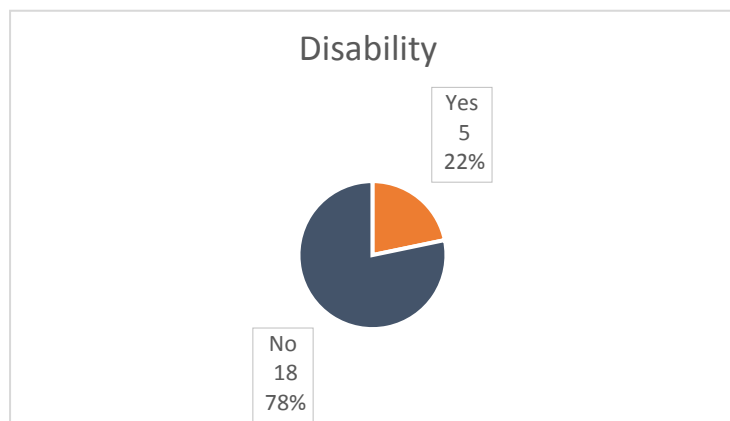
The majority of service users that responded were women. Further information from male service users is required to understand more about their needs and priorities.





## Disability

23 out of a possible 47 service users responded. 5 consider themselves disabled and 18 have no disability.



## Sexuality

23 out of a possible 47 service users responded. 19 are heterosexual, and 4 either selected other or preferred not to say.

Sexuality	Count
Heterosexual/straight	19
Prefer not to say	3
Other	1
Gay man	0
Gay woman/lesbian	0
Bisexual	0

## Ethnic background

22 people out of possible 47 services users responded. The majority (18) are White British.

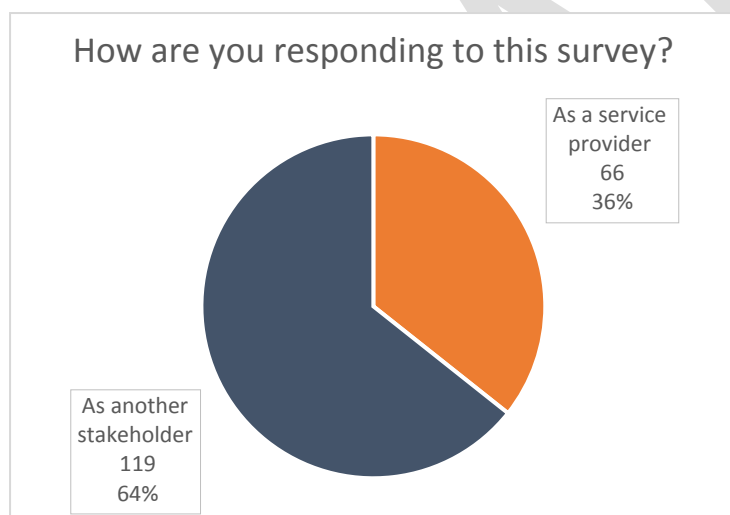
Ethnic groups	Count
White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	18
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1
Asian/Asian British: Other	1
Black/Black British: African	1
Any other ethnic group	1
White Irish	0
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0

Mixed White and Black African	0
Mixed White and Asian	0
Other Mixed	0
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0
Black/Black British: Caribbean	0
Black/Black British: Other	0
Other ethnic group: Arab	0

## Stakeholders

Definition: a stakeholder is anyone other than a service user provider who has an interest or influence on the domestic abuse services provided in the city, such as a commissioner, councillor, healthcare worker, social worker, police etc.

Out of a total of 248 people who responded to the survey, **201** are stakeholders. Out of those 201, 66 are service providers and 119 are other stakeholders.



## Service Providers

49 out of a possible 66 service providers specified their organisation.

Organisations	Count
Whitefriars	1
Coventry City Council/ Social Care	4
Route 21	1
Criminal Justice Liaison & Diversion Team NHS	1
Safeguarding	1

Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (CRASAC)	1
NHS child and family services	1
NSPCC	2
Early Help and Protection	1
Unite the union	1
President Kennedy School	1
Cafcass	1
West Midlands Police	1
Coventry CRC	1
CDVASS	1
uhcw	1
Probation	1

45 out of possible 66 stakeholders specified the services they provide.

Services Provided	Count
General advice and information for victims of domestic violence and abuse	41
Case management	34
Advice and information on benefits	25
Advice and information on homelessness and housing	24
Support for court proceedings	24
Accommodation	23
Aftercare support	22
Counselling	19
Advice and information on legal issues, including immigration	17
Debt advice	17
Peer support	14
Home security installations	7
Support for perpetrators	7

#### Other Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Count
Specified ( see table below)	71
Other (see table below)	40
Social worker	22
Other health care worker	17
Teacher	15
Commissioner	5

Police	4
Councillor	3
GP	0
Practice nurse	0

Specify	Categories
Independent Reviewing Officer	
Adult Commissioning	
Housing association	
Coventry safeguarding Adults Board	
Physiotherapist	
Personal Advisor	
Operational Lead	
MENTAL HEALTH NURSE	
Staff nurse	
Mental health support worker	
IRO	
Student social worker	
Health visitor	
CP chair	
Headteacher	
Manager	
Charity supporting women at risk of sexual exploitation in Coventry	
Safeguarding officer	
Physiotherapist	
Specialist lead nurse LD/CAMHS	
Physiotherapist	
Support worker	
Work within safeguarding	
Health	
Public health Officer	
Charity that, amongst other things, supports migrant/refugee victims of DV	
CWPT	
Charity	
NSPCC	
Charity Worker (Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre)	
Partner voluntary sector agency	
Pastoral Team	
Worker at Refugee Centre	
Welfare Rights adviser	
Voluntary sector team manager	
Principal	
Mental health and community provider	

Grants provider	
Family Support based in a school	
School pastoral and family support manager	
Safeguarding Children and Adult Boards	
Counsellor	
Administrator in a school	
Safeguarding Lead at school	
School	
Designated Safeguarding Officer	
Head teacher	
Employment worker	
Occupational Therapist	
Early help manager	
Community worker	
Alternative education	
Safeguarding Nurse	
Justice of the Peace	
Named nurse safeguarding children	
Trustee community organisation	
School Governor	
Family court advisor Childrens guardian	
Childrens guardian family court advisor	
Caseworker	
Family Court Advosor, CAFCASS	
Healthwatch volunteer	
Foster Carer providing care to children who have witnesses DV	
Safeguarding Nurse	
EHPCo	
Cafcass	
Adult Commissioning	
Guardian/Family Court Advisor	
Safeguarding Nurse	
Lecturer at university	
Manager of 2 different staff members that confided they were victims of domestic abuse	

### Priorities

108 out of a possible 201 stakeholders ranked their top 10 priorities. There were 20 priorities listed and stakeholder had been asked to list their top 10 priorities in order of importance.

A weighting methodology was applied to the analysis of this question. There were 20 priorities and each was ranked from 1 to 20. A scoring was applied to each rank. For example 20 points were applied to each first rank vote and 19 points to each 2<sup>nd</sup> rank vote, 18 points to each 3<sup>rd</sup> rank vote, etc. Then the total points were summed and divided by 20 (the number of priorities) to get an average score. The result is presented in the table below.

Rank	Priorities	Avr. Score
1	Children and young people who live in homes with domestic violence and abuse are protected from harm.	73
2	Staff working with the public (e.g. GPs, teachers) can spot the signs of domestic violence and abuse (including honour-based violence and forced marriage).	64
3	Services consider the needs of the whole family to try to break the cycle of abuse that can continue between generations.	61
4	Services work in partnership to make sure that people who experience or carry out domestic violence and abuse are referred or signposted appropriately.	53
5	To increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse among children and young people.	53
6	People who experience domestic violence and abuse know where to find help.	52
7	People with additional needs (e.g. a mental health condition, drug and alcohol problems) who experience domestic violence and abuse are offered appropriate support.	52
8	Cultural attitudes and religious beliefs that give rise to honour-based violence and forced marriage are challenged.	49
9	Services work in partnership to make sure that people who experience domestic violence and abuse don't have to tell their story more than once.	45
10	People who carry out domestic violence and abuse are supported to help change their behaviour.	42

The table shows that the top three priorities from a stakeholder point of view are that children and young people who live in homes with domestic abuse are protected from harm; that staff working with the public can spot the signs of domestic abuse; and that services consider the needs of the whole family to try to break the cycle of abuse that can continue between generations.

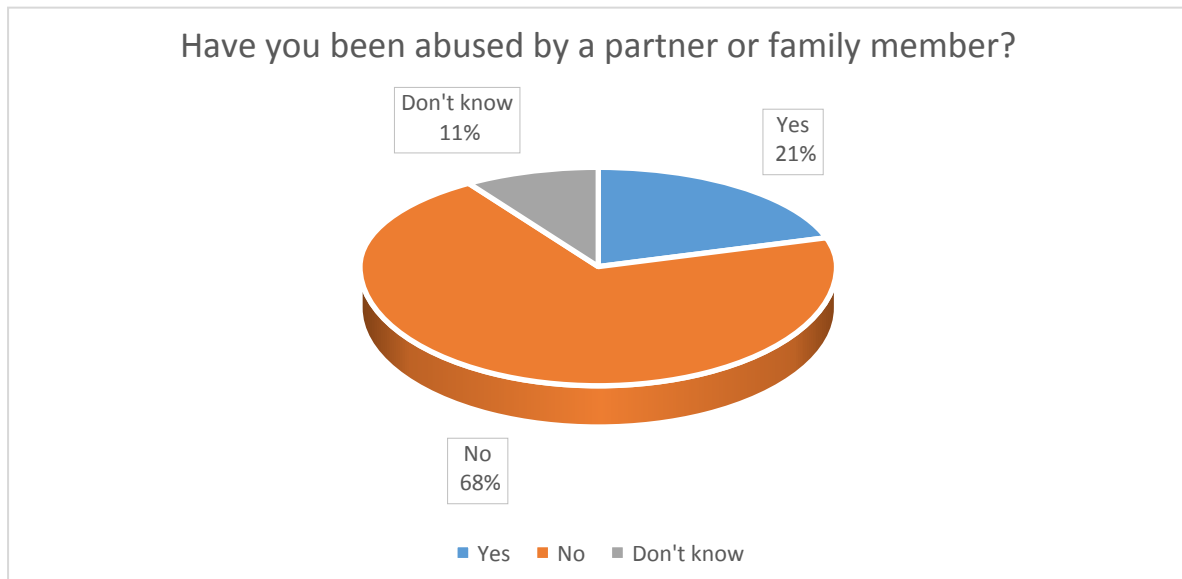
## Survey Results from Grapevine

### Who are Grapevine?

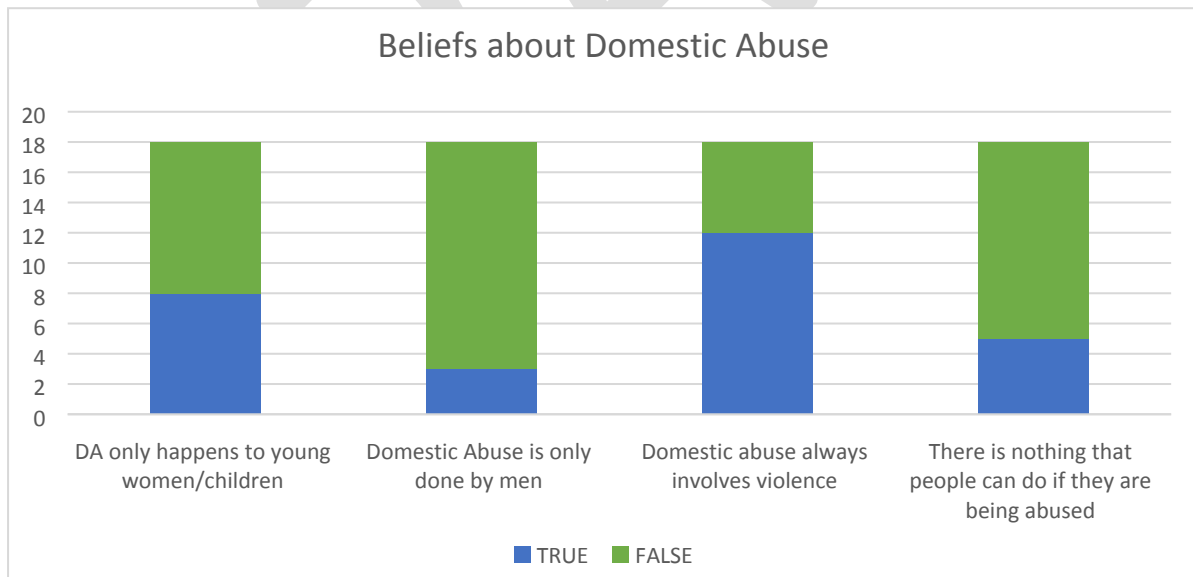
Grapevine operate throughout Coventry and Warwickshire and help people experiencing isolation, poverty and disadvantage to build better lives. They offer practical person-centred guidance, advocacy and support.

## Consultation

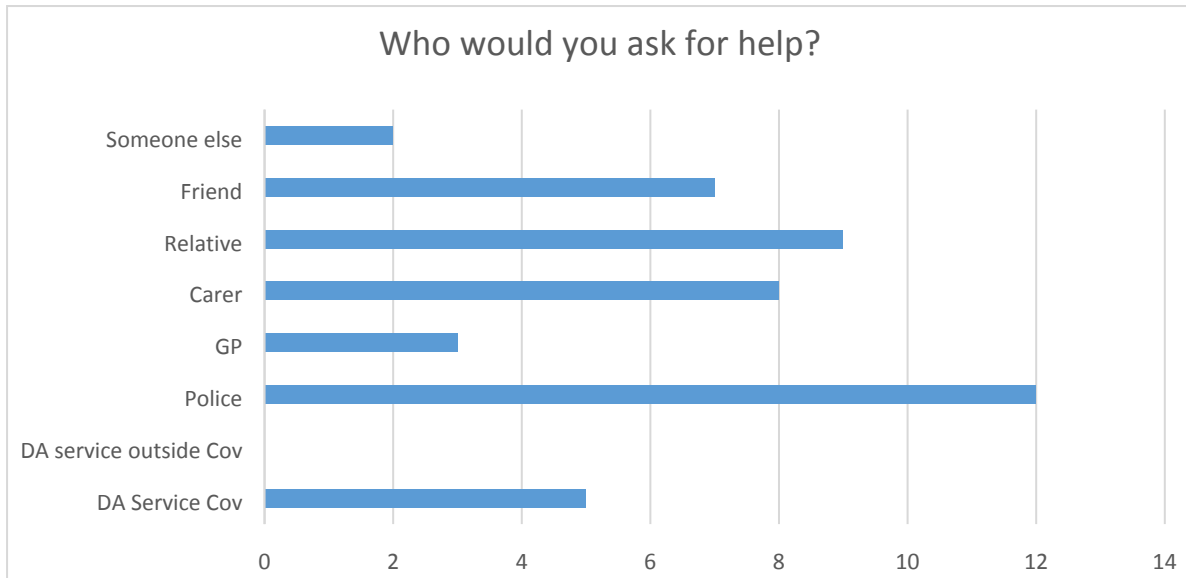
Grapevine surveyed 18 adults with care and support needs to explore their understanding of domestic abuse and their attitudes towards seeking help. The results were as follows:



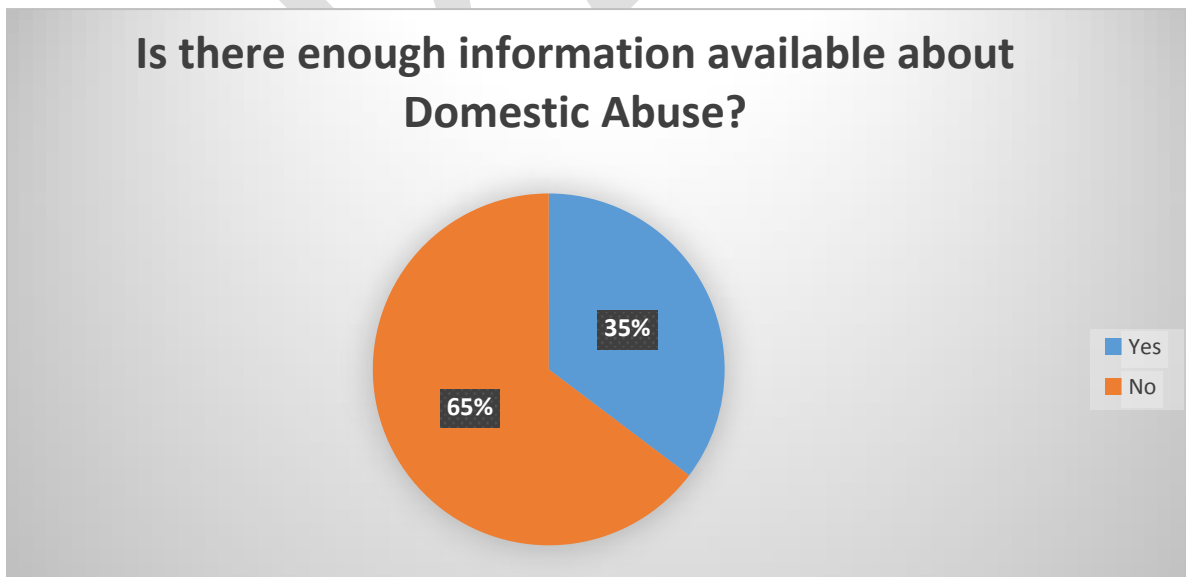
It is interesting to note that 11% of respondents didn't know if they had been abused. This helps demonstrate some of the complexities of providing services to groups who may be more vulnerable to certain types of domestic abuse and identifying early warning signs.



The survey also explored some of the beliefs held by respondents. They were presented with a series of questions to which they were asked to respond true or false. The results indicate a strong belief that domestic abuse always involves violence. 50% of respondents thought that domestic abuse only happens to young women and/or children.



When asked where help could be sought from if you were experiencing domestic abuse the majority of respondents identified the police. Relatives, friends or a carer were other frequent responses.



When asked if they felt if there was enough information about domestic abuse almost two-thirds of those surveyed said no. This would seem to suggest that there is more work to do in promoting information to those with care and support needs. Research has suggested that as a group they are more vulnerable to abuse or all types.



## Positive Youth Foundation Focus Group

### Focus group with children and young people

Positive Youth Foundation, a non-profit organisation that supports children and young people, was approached to hold a focus group on domestic abuse. The group was facilitated through the regular Positive Young Thinkers group that the organisation runs to discuss different issues and took place on 6/12/17. The group comprised 5 females and 5 males, aged between 15 and 18. Two were black British African, one was Black British/Irish African and the remainder were British Asian. All attended school or sixth form in the postcode area of CV1; one person attended college in CV2. They were initially split into three groups (Group 1 – two females, one male; group 2 – two females, one male; and group 3 – one male, two females) to discuss the following:

- What domestic abuse is, who the victims of domestic abuse are and who carries it out.
- Where they have received information on domestic abuse from.

As a whole group they were asked about:

- Whether they feel they have received enough information on domestic abuse.
- Where they think their information on domestic abuse should come from and what other information they would like to receive.
- Whether they would seek help if they experienced domestic abuse or witnessed it in the family; and who they would seek help from.
- What would stop them from seeking help and what kind of help they would like to receive?

The key themes from the discussions are summarised below.

### What things come to mind when you hear the term domestic abuse?

Participants recognised that domestic abuse can happen outside of the context of a partner relationship, and that children and young people can be affected. They understood that as well as physical abuse it could include verbal, sexual and mental abuse and forced marriage. The intergenerational nature of domestic abuse was also recognised.

They acknowledged that both men and women can be victims. Although it was recognised as being more common in women, participants felt that men were not taken seriously as victims and were not talked about as much.

The young people referred to culture, ethnicity, stress, anger, mental illness and alcohol as triggers for domestic abuse. Some felt that individuals from certain ethnic backgrounds or who held quite 'orthodox' views considered it acceptable to hit their children and therefore would not consider this behaviour abusive. Where domestic abuse was triggered by stress or alcohol, it was felt that this was accidental.

Domestic abuse was talked about as something that is not widely discussed, and that no-one every truly knows what happens in the home. It was raised by one person that victims of abuse may feel that they have done something wrong, and because they love their abuser they allow the abuse to take place.

### Where do you get your information from about domestic abuse?

Participants got the majority of their information from TV (BBC iPlayer, Hollyoaks, the news, Jeremy Kyle) and social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube). Some expressed the view that the media manipulated how domestic abuse was presented and did not always show the whole story. They felt that it was biased towards women as no-one wanted to hear about female on male abuse.

One girl reported that her class had been shown 'Murdered by my Father', and cited it as a good resource for learning about domestic abuse. One girl also reported that her class was taught about domestic abuse, but that the class was only for girls; the boys were taught about terrorism instead.

Some of the young people said that they had learned about domestic abuse from witnessing incidents in their local area, and noted that people generally did not want to intervene.

*Do you feel that you have received enough information? What other information would you like to receive?*

The young people felt that there was not enough information about domestic abuse, honour-based forced marriage. None of them knew that there were services available to support victims.

*Where do you think information about domestic abuse should come from?*

It was generally felt that school was not the right place to be educated about domestic abuse. Reasons for this included: fear of developing a reputation and being bullied for being a 'weak person', the formality of the setting, and feeling uncomfortable talking to teachers.

There was a consensus that information should be delivered by young people (under 30) with lived experience, as they felt that they had more knowledge and credibility than professionals. It was also suggested that education should be delivered on an ongoing basis, and in the community (e.g. youth centres).

They felt that if information was to be delivered in school or by professionals it should be informal.

*What are the barriers to asking for help (as a victim or witness of domestic abuse)?*

The barriers that the young people reported to seeking help were not knowing where to go ask for help, and a fear of getting involved because of the potential repercussions.