

# Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Strategy

2025-2028

- Executive Summary – page 2
- Our Strategy – page 2
- Our Vision – page 3
- Foreword – page 3
- Introduction – page 5
- Domestic Abuse – Definition – page 6
- National picture – page 8
- Governance – page 8
- Local Authority Statutory Duties – page 9
- Needs Assessment – page 11
- Data from our refuges and safe accommodation – page 11
- Gap Analysis of Safe Accommodation and Support Provision – page 12
- Funding – page 13
- Pan Sussex Strategic Priorities – page 13
- Prevention and Earliest Intervention – page 14
- Increase awareness of domestic abuse and support available – page 14
- Clare’s Law Awareness and Applications – page 15
- Education and Awareness Raising with professionals – page 16
- Specialist Training – page 16
- Preventing Escalation of Abusive Behaviours – page 17
- Support for Everyone – page 17
- Reducing Barriers to Accessing Support – page 18
- Safe Accommodation – page 19
- Reducing Risk – page 20
- Supporting Children and Young People – page 21
- Experience of the Criminal Justice System – page 22
- Housing – page 23
- Recovery – page 25
- Impact of Domestic Abuse on Mental Health – page 25
- Promoting Connections and Processing Trauma – page 26
- Strengthening and Supporting Families – page 27
- Economic Independence – page 28
- Valuing Lived Experience – page 28
- How We Will Measure Success – page 29

## Acknowledgements and Accessing Support

Without the engagement and participation of survivors, hard working professionals, and our wider communities across the county who have bravely shared their views, reflections and experiences, we would be unable to fully understand the need of survivors and their children across Sussex. Thank you.

Thank you for your time, your energy and the sharing of your expertise through experience. Together, we can change things for good.

We also want to recognise the commitment and contribution of voluntary sector provision within this space. Without the dedication of many within the sector, services would not function. Many within these services have personally experienced abuse, choosing to use their own experiences to help and support others.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you are not alone. Help and support is available countywide, and local service details can be found [here](#).

Alternatively, you can contact the freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge on 0808 2000 247 or the Men's' Advice Line on 0808 801 0327.

If you are concerned about your use of abusive behaviour the Respect helpline is available on 0808 8024040.

If you are in immediate danger, please do not be afraid to call 999. Sussex Police can be contacted on the non-emergency telephone number 101, or you can visit your local police station to speak with an officer.

If you can't speak out loud, you can press 55 so that the operator knows you need help. You can also video call 999 to communicate in BSL for free by visiting the 999 BSL website or downloading the app.

## Executive Summary

In December 2021 West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council published the first Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Safe accommodation and support strategy. Here, we set out how we would help and protect survivors of domestic abuse and their children across Sussex, in safe accommodation and the community, in line with our statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The same year, the Pan Sussex Domestic and Sexual Violence and abuse strategic framework was published, identifying our strategic priorities, and our joint approaches to preventing and eliminating domestic abuse and the immeasurable harm that it causes.

Alongside setting out our joint strategic ambitions, this document provides a series of recommendations to ensure that we are designing, commissioning and delivering the right services,

in the best way, to those that need them, when they are needed. Progress has been measured against the original recommendations – identifying success, and where there is still work to be done.

A Sussex wide needs assessment has been undertaken – this helps us to understand the demand, delivery and quality of our domestic abuse services by exploring the needs, views and experiences of survivors, their children and the wider community.

We are committed to meaningful collaboration and action, working with our statutory, voluntary and community sector partners, Voices of Lived Experience Board members and communities, we strive to ensure that nobody is failed, when it comes to being safe, protected and seeking the justice they are entitled to when they have endured abuse. We strive, through this action, to make Sussex a safer place for everyone.

## Our Strategy

Together, West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council will work in partnership to ensure the fulfilment of our statutory duties under the DA act and set and deliver on our strategic priorities through recommendations identified from our assessment of need.

## Our Vision

We will deliver a comprehensive response to domestic abuse, with survivors at the heart of all we do. We will strive to make Sussex a safer place for everyone, no matter who you are.

Survivors and their children will receive the support they need, when they need it. Our services reflect and understand the needs of our diverse communities, and respond in ways that are person centred, trauma informed and needs lead, we will endeavour to ensure that nobody in Sussex, is left behind.

Our strategic priorities have been informed by data gathered during the needs assessment process, and by what victim/survivors have told us is important to them. We will use local and national data and research to inform our priorities, understand risk and hold each other to account in supporting survivors and tackling domestic abuse.

## Foreword

Foreword from Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead member for Adult Social Care and Health for East Sussex County Council, Councillor Amanda Jupp Cabinet Member for Adult's Services for West Sussex County Council, Councillor Emma Daniel, Cabinet member for Children, Families and Youth services and Ending Violence against Women and Girls for Brighton & Hove County Council:

The Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation & Support 2025-2028 sets out how we will help, support and protect all victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe

accommodation and by providing community-based support, in line with our duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Board brings together a diverse range of stakeholders and expert service providers, whilst ensuring that voices of those with lived experience of domestic abuse are represented, heard, and help to inform the local authorities' and board's decision making.

The partnership continues to play a critical role in delivering the aims of this strategy and achieving our shared vision of increased safety, awareness, and access to high quality support services for all victims of abuse.

This includes support that enables survivors to remain safely in their own homes or in a variety of safe accommodation options, as well as a range of community-based support services that understand and can meet the needs of our diverse communities. Since our first strategy was published in 2021, we have introduced and embedded a range of new interventions, services and initiatives. Examples include the creation of the Voices of Lived Experience Board, the co-location of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in Housing Options Teams, a specialist young people's domestic abuse recovery service in West Sussex, safe accommodation units for some of our most vulnerable survivors who have multiple, compound support needs in East Sussex, and additional specialist IDVAs based in hospitals across the county. Brighton and Hove City Council have developed an enhanced Housing Pathway for survivors of domestic abuse. The revised pathway has ensured survivors of DA receive appropriate wraparound services.

We are proud of the progress we have made and recognise there is still much to do. This strategy will continue to build on these achievements, prioritising gaps in support provision, addressing inequality in access to services and responding to what those with lived experience have told us is important to them.

Our strategy has been developed with survivors and their children at the heart of all we do. The survivors' stories found in this strategy serve as a powerful reminder of the complexities they often face on their journeys to safety and recovery.

We recommit to challenging negative, or victim blaming attitudes to domestic abuse, ending stigma, raising awareness and intervening at the earliest possible opportunity to stop domestic abuse before it starts.

The impact of domestic abuse is both far reaching, and long lasting. Tackling it is everyone's business, and we all have a role to play in ending domestic abuse, for everyone, for good.

### **Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne OBE**

Across Sussex, we have built a strong and meaningful dialogue between victims and survivors of domestic abuse, local authorities and service providers. This vital collaboration ensures that individuals are seen, heard and supported during some of the most challenging moments in their lives.

I am confident that our renewed pan-Sussex strategy will further strengthen these connections in the years ahead. However, we cannot become complacent and we must remain committed to learning, adapting and refining our services to meet evolving needs.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those involved in the development of this strategy. Your dedication, expertise and willingness to share lived experiences has been invaluable and your contributions reflect a deep and unwavering commitment to safeguarding our most vulnerable.

This document represents a vital foundation for the work taking place across our county to address and prevent domestic abuse. It is my firm ambition to continue supporting essential services and to champion new initiatives within Sussex Police, ensuring that we reach as many people as possible who need our help to escape dangerous and distressing situations.

**Ben Newman, Detective Superintendent, Public Protection - Sussex Police**

As Chair of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meeting, I extend my full support to the priorities set out in the Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028.

Sussex Police is committed to delivering an outstanding service in our efforts tackling Domestic Abuse. We are focused on working closely with partners and communities, putting victim/survivors at the heart of what we do, and, relentlessly pursuing those that are responsible for perpetrating abuse.

---

‘Domestic abuse changed me forever. I will never be the person that I was before, but the help and support I have received from services has meant that I am emerging as a stronger, happier version of that person. Finally, I feel free.’

---

## Introduction

Nobody Left Behind.

Our partnership commitment to eradicating domestic abuse in Sussex, for good, remains.

The Pan Sussex Domestic abuse and Safe Accommodation and Support Strategy 2024-2027 sets out our collaborative strategic approach to ensuring that tackling domestic abuse, in all its forms, is prioritised across Sussex. We have included community based support services in our needs assessment, and have measured progress against the original recommendations.

Domestic abuse is a crime that predominantly affects women and that whilst anyone may be a victim/survivor, women are more likely to experience repeated and more severe forms of abuse.

Every case of domestic abuse will be taken seriously, and all victims and survivors have the right to access help and support that is right for them. We will ensure our local response to domestic abuse is

accessible to all, regardless of sex and other protected characteristics, and view the problem through an intersectional lens.

Every individual will have unique needs and experiences and many people will face additional barriers and concerns when seeking and accessing help and support, including those in marginalised communities. We commit to viewing the whole person and the challenges they face, not just on an individual level but by looking at the whole of the person's identity with an intersectional lens. Intersectionality is a framework for recognising how our different layers of identities, such as sex, and race, and how they interact to create unique experiences of privilege or disadvantage.

The impact of domestic abuse is far reaching and long lasting, and affects family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues and society as a whole. Together, we are focusing on creating a stronger system, one that supports and makes clear the responsibility on every person and every organisation to understand the role they play in tackling this issue.

## Domestic Abuse Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, set out below. Further detail on context and definition can be found [here](#)

The behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are "personally connected[ii]" to each other
- The behaviour is abusive

Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse[iii]
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

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

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now recognises children that witness, hear or experience domestic abuse as victims in their own right.[iv]

The landscape around tackling domestic abuse is changing and evolving, and we will respond to this, embracing innovation and new ways of working. We will continue to codesign and deliver services with those with lived experience and continue to have the voices of survivors at the heart of everything we do.

There is a clear intersection between domestic abuse and wider violence against women and girls (VAWG) related offences. Whilst this strategy focuses on our responses to domestic abuse, the

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board works closely with Sussex Police and with specialist services to fully support the cross cutting VAWG agendas Pan Sussex.

Violence against Women and Girls is defined as:

“Any act of gender – based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.

VAWG is an umbrella term that describes the wide range of abuse that predominantly and disproportionately impact upon women and girls but can be experienced by all genders. VAWG includes but is not limited to:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence/rape
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual exploitation
- Stalking
- So called honour based abuse
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation/cutting
- Religious and spiritual abuse
- Violence against women in public spaces
- Forced Prostitution and human trafficking
- Digitally enabled Abuse

‘Honour-based’ abuse is an umbrella term which may involve physical abuse including forced physical traumas such as breast flattening or female genital mutilation, psychological pressure or forced marriage. This is typically perpetrated by a person’s family and members of a community with the aim of protecting or defending honour.

In line with the statutory definition, this strategy recognises that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, sexuality or background[i]. However, domestic abuse is a predominantly gendered crime and should be understood in the wider context of Violence Against Women and Girls. In the majority of cases, domestic abuse is experienced by women and perpetrated by men.[1] Women are more likely to experience different types of abuse, multiple incidents and to be the victim of a domestic homicide.

Domestic abuse is a societal issue requiring a whole society response. We are working towards a place where everyone in our communities will recognise and understand domestic abuse and will be



empowered to be a part of change. When it comes to domestic abuse, there is no 'them and us'.  
**Only us.**

## National Picture

- In 2024, in the UK, 2.3 million adults were victims of domestic abuse - 1 in 5 adults will experience domestic abuse during their lifetime. This equates to approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6/7 men. We know that men face additional barriers in recognising domestic abuse and in seeking help and support, making it challenging to capture more accurate numbers. The number of transgender and non-binary people experiencing domestic abuse, including intimate partner abuse is thought to be approximately 1 in 6[i]
- Nationally, domestic abuse accounts for 17% of all crime, and a call is made to the police every 30 seconds in relation to domestic abuse.
- Migrant survivors are extremely vulnerable and face barriers to accessing safe accommodation and refuge. Data, obtained by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) from the Home Office, evidenced that every police force across England and Wales had referred victims of domestic abuse to Immigration Enforcement at some point between April 2020 to March 2023, meaning that there is nowhere that victims could safely report to police without fear of immigration action.
- Approximately 26% of children under eighteen live in a household where an adult has experienced domestic abuse.

## Local Picture

- 6,015 survivors' cases were heard at MARACs across Sussex
- In 2023-24, Sussex Police attended 18,402 domestic offences/incidents and spent 46,000 hours at the scene.
- Between 2023-2024, 45,125 victims of domestic abuse across Sussex received support from domestic abuse services.
- In Sussex 67% of respondents to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's national survey on service provision said that specialist support for children was not available.
- Across Sussex there were 12,903 reports of domestic abuse recorded by Sussex police in 2023-2024.
- 9,533 of those reports were repeat victims.
- The police remain critical in their responses to domestic abuse. Research by the national Domestic Abuse Commissioner's office has shown that nationally, 43% of respondents stated that the first professionals that they told about the abuse were the police.

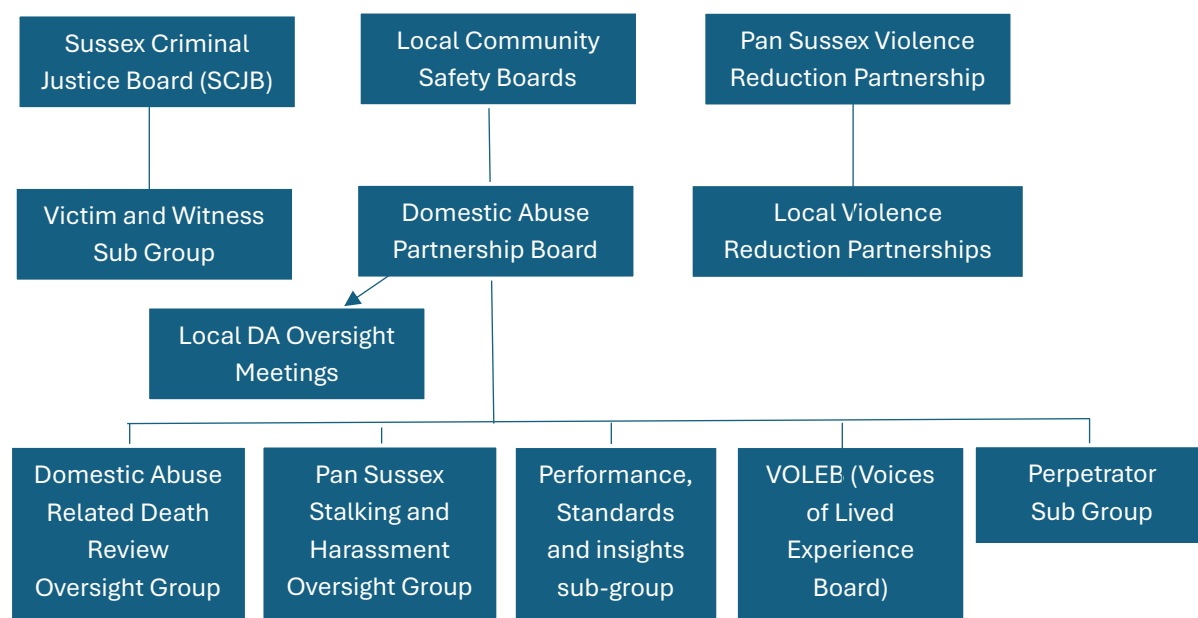
## Governance

The Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the associated governance structure supporting the function of the Board, brings together subject matter experts and stakeholders, who work in partnership to strengthen responses across Sussex.

The Voices of Lived Experience Board works in close partnership with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Manager, ensuring that survivor voice and experiences are central to the work.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board works closely with other statutory boards across Sussex including the statutory Safeguarding Adult's Board's, Safeguarding Children's Boards and Community Safety Partnerships that ensure delivery of legal duties linked to the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act. This strategy includes areas which relate to these legal duties which are highlighted using the below logo.

The Partnership will work collaboratively to meet the commitments within this Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Strategy, which sets out the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board's joint vision, priorities, and commitments.



## Local Authority Statutory Duties

The Domestic Abuse Act has been designed to provide further protections to those who experience domestic abuse and strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.

West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council have a responsibility by law to assess the need for, and provide support for those in safe accommodation for all those impacted by abuse and their children, both for those who live within area, and those who come from outside the area.

The definition of safe accommodation includes:

- Refuge
- Specialist accommodation (including dedicated specialist support for people with protected characteristics such as a disability);
- Dispersed accommodation which includes self-contained accommodation;
- Move on, or second stage accommodation, a place to move to when intensive support is no longer needed but a level of support is still beneficial;
- Multi agency accommodation with shared facilities that should be single sex
- Sanctuary schemes where physical security measures have been put in place into a person's home to help keep them safe
- No Recourse to Public Funds.

People experiencing abuse who may have limited access to public funding due to their immigration status may be highly vulnerable, their status may be an additional way for a person using abusive behaviour to control them. Dependent on a person's situation there may be opportunities to support them under various legislation which might include the Care Act (2014), the Children's Act (Section 17, 1989) and the Human Rights Act (1998). This strategy includes a commitment to increase professional awareness, which is further detailed in the 'Support for Everyone' section.

Support for survivors includes a range of services from emotional and practical support, advocacy, counselling and therapy to housing, financial and legal advice. It also covers specialist support for victims with particular characteristics or additional needs (such as dedicated support for LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors, immigration advice or support for mental health needs), and for children (such as play therapists or specialist workers). This support can be provided by on-site staff (e.g. within the refuge) or visiting support workers.

---

*'During my time in refuge the support was good. However there was a lack of support to help me access affordable accommodation at the end of my time there. So I ended having to seek more expensive private rented accommodation – that was really difficult, financially I struggle.'*

---

---

*'I'm so glad I left, and the help and support that I received from my IDVA meant that I could start to rebuild my life, she helped me with all of the practical things, as well as giving me the emotional support I needed. She believed in me and that helped me to believe in me. It was a fresh start.'*

---

## Needs Assessment

To best understand the safe accommodation and support provision, including community based support Pan Sussex, a county wide needs assessment was undertaken, consulting with survivors, practitioners and the wider community. The needs assessment used the template provided by the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), now MHCLG, to collect and evaluate data from a wide range of sources. This strategic needs assessment uses this data to identify trends in service provision and highlight any gaps in support and provision, or areas that need to be strengthened.

Across Sussex, we are committed to co-design and production with survivors of domestic abuse. We recognise through the creation of the Voices of Lived Experience Board (VOLEB) the invaluable contributions that those with lived experience make to ensuring that our services to domestic abuse are appropriate and responsive to need.

## Data from our refuges and safe accommodation

In 2023-2024, 664 people were supported in safe accommodation, including refuge, dispersed accommodation, specialist accommodation and sanctuary schemes across Sussex.

## Who do our refuges and dispersed accommodation offer support to?

The below services will consider referrals from women with mental health support needs, with drug use support needs, with alcohol support needs, with previous refuge evictions, who are ex-offenders:

- East Sussex
- West Sussex
- Brighton & Hove

\*All dispersed units will consider male survivors and their children, with the same variety of support needs as women.

---

*‘Victims should not have to jump through hoops to be offered safe and suitable accommodation. The wishes and needs of victims should be listened to, and taken into consideration. There needs to be better training to ask questions sensitively, and in a trauma informed way.’[i]*

---

## Gap Analysis of Safe Accommodation and Support Provision

The table gives an overview of the provisional gaps, which area they are in, and where in the strategy we are committing to meeting the gaps. The strategic priority areas are colour coded, and the colour of the tick indicates where you will find the information.

Service Provision	Inconsistency/Gap	Local Authority Area	Where in the strategy will the gap be met?
<b>Refuge</b>	Refuge considering referrals from survivors with multiple complex needs	West Sussex	✓
	Refuge with disability support, including wheelchair access and equipment for deaf survivors	West Sussex, Brighton & Hove	✓
	Refuge considering referrals from survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds	West Sussex	✓
	Refuge considering referrals from transgender survivors	West Sussex	✓
	Refuge accommodating larger families	East Sussex/Brighton and Hove	✓
<b>Specialist accommodation</b>	LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation	Pan Sussex	✓
	Male domestic abuse specialist accommodation	Pan-Sussex	✓
	Specialist accommodation for survivors with multiple complex needs	West Sussex Brighton and Hove	✓
	Specialist accommodation for survivors from minoritised ethnic groups	Pan-Sussex	✓
<b>Other accommodation options</b>	Dispersed/Self-contained accommodation	East Sussex/Brighton and Hove	✓
	Short-term respite accommodation	Pan Sussex	✓
	Appropriate move-on accommodation	Pan-Sussex	✓
	Perpetrator accommodation	Pan-Sussex	✓
<b>Support</b>	Floating support	Pan-Sussex	✓
	Children and young persons specialist worker	East Sussex	✓ ✓
	Support in temporary Accommodation	Pan-Sussex	✓ ✓

	Support that is accessible for those with multiple compound needs	West Sussex, Brighton and Hove	✓
--	---	--------------------------------	---

## How will we meet the gaps?

As a partnership, we will work to close the gaps in provision through local action plans, that will be monitored at the Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. We have used the data and information gathered as part of the needs assessment to identify and set our strategic ambitions - partnership action will reduce and close the gaps, improving support options for all.

The Partnership will seek opportunities to access funding to support commitments and work with local providers to strengthen local bids from across Sussex.

## Funding

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has created specific funding to support those impacted by domestic abuse who access safe accommodation. The funding allocated to date is detailed in Appendix A.

Funding is uncertain past the end of March 2026. Funding available will continue to be used to meet gaps identified through the needs assessments which are refreshed or renewed yearly. Whilst statutory funding is specific to the support of those who reside in safe accommodation, we know that many people experiencing domestic abuse will choose to access support in the community, wanting to increase their safety whilst maintaining their support networks and homes.

We recognise that this strategy is aspirational and that not all elements are funded through statutory monies.

Funding for some areas of this strategy is dependent on continued local and national funding and options for collaborative bids.

## Pan Sussex Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities outline where we will focus our attention and resources to achieve the best outcomes for all survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

There are three pillars that provide the framework for our priority areas.

1. **Early Intervention:** It starts with focus on early intervention and prevention which aims to challenge societal attitudes and stigma linked to discussing abuse. We aim to increase awareness, reduce the escalation of abusive behaviours and encourage conversation, education and early intervention.
2. **Support for Everyone:** Support for everyone focuses on how we can best support those in need by looking at how we can fill the gaps identified through the needs

assessment, and provide the best provision for adults, children and families through a truly intersectional lens.

3. **Recovery:** Lastly the strategy focuses on recovery, and how services can be shaped and developed to respond to a longer-term journey and progression to healing, recognising that this involves broader structures which aid the re-establishment of stability for all survivors of abuse.

The following key recommendations will be driven through the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and locality domestic abuse and VAWG action plans using measurable outcomes that support us to achieve our strategic priorities.

## Prevention and Earliest Intervention

Prioritising prevention and earliest intervention aims to increase the focus on stopping domestic abuse before it starts.

We will challenge the root causes of abuse, and engage young men and boys in challenging misogyny in all its forms, empowering them to become part of the solution. Early intervention means increasing awareness and providing education, so that people are aware of what domestic abuse is, while giving people the skills they need to identify healthy relationships. Education also helps people to identify when their behaviours may be abusive. Earlier identification of harmful behaviours can support access to interventions which can prevent escalation of this behaviour.

Clare's Law (DVDS) can also support opportunities to identify risk earlier.

We will focus on helping people identify when behaviour meets the definition of domestic abuse as early as possible, ensuring that all survivors can get the support that is right for them, to stop the impacts from escalating. This process needs to be clear, and accessible to all.

Early intervention can take different forms. We know that anyone can be impacted by abuse at any age, and identifying opportunities to reduce the long term impacts needs to happen across life stages.

## Increase awareness of domestic abuse and support available

Knowing where and how to access support is critical for survivors of domestic abuse.

Regular and effective communication campaigns can support increased awareness and can also be used to promote understanding of domestic abuse and that it can affect anyone, irrespective of age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Ensuring our communities understand what a healthy relationship is, and what it looks like and how to deal with a relationship ending in a healthy way, can support identification of relationships which are abusive and help to stop abuse before it starts.

To increase awareness of service provision and wider understanding of domestic abuse, who it affects and what we can do, we will:

- Work collaboratively to promote consistent messaging on access, ensuring that messaging and imagery is inclusive and diverse;
- Use available communication channels to increase awareness of what abuse is and that it can impact anyone, ensuring communication is accessible;
- Work to 'reach out' to groups currently not accessing services; this includes making communications accessible and translating information where appropriate, and working alongside 'by and for' organisations and organisations specifically supporting migrant survivors and survivors with no resource to public funds;
- Include communications on 'honour based' abuse including forced marriage, and work with communities to better understand how best to increase awareness of support;
- Increase awareness of the different types of abuse including coercive behaviour, economic abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, harassment and stalking and online or digital abuse;
- Continue to improve information, promotion and uptake of available resources for more consistent domestic abuse curriculum content as part of healthy relationship and sex education, helping to identify abuse.

**As employers we have a duty to our employees. This includes where they are impacted by abuse. We will:**

- Develop, embed and promote policies and procedures that allow people to access specialist support considering adaptations where required that enable them to stay safe at work;
- Allegations of abusive behaviour made against staff members will be taken seriously. We will support the complainant to understand available options for support in line with our policies and procedures.

## Clare's Law Awareness and Applications

Clare's Law, is named after Clare Wood, who was killed in 2009 by her ex-partner, who, unknown to her, had been violent to previous partners.

Also known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), it gives people the 'right to ask' if their current or ex-partner has any previous history of violence or abuse.

Under the 'right to ask' the person impacted by abuse, family members and close friends can ask for this information which is released to the person at risk.



The request is considered by a number of relevant services, such as the police, probation and children's services. Information is only then passed on to the person at risk if it is deemed lawful, proportionate and necessary.

Under Clare's Law people also have the 'right to know' where services will make a decision to disclose release if they believe someone is at risk.

## Education and Awareness Raising with professionals

Domestic abuse is everybody's business.

Across our Partnership we have the opportunity to promote a stronger understanding of abuse encompassing a variety of professionals, including those that work in schools, or who come into contact with survivors, their children and families.

All professionals should feel confident and empowered to respond to disclosures.

When people make a disclosure, they should feel safe, listened to and believed. It is important that professionals access comprehensive training as part of their induction in all roles, and that training is reviewed and updated regularly, reflecting the experiences and needs of survivors that are seldom heard.

## Specialist Training

Making sure that good quality, comprehensive training is available to all professionals, so that they can develop the skills they need to identify and respond to domestic abuse as early as possible will be prioritised.

To support all staff to identify domestic abuse, and have trauma informed, survivor centred, appropriate and timely responses we will:

- Support professionals across our services to be domestic abuse informed, taking opportunities to identify risk and using trauma informed approaches in response;
- Continue to develop our understanding of trauma and ensure our staff have access to training and development opportunities to explore and develop in this area;
- Train professionals to ensure that every contact results in survivors feeling safe, supported and taken seriously when disclosing abuse;
- Train professionals in understanding, the links between domestic abuse and suicide;
- Ensure training is available for practitioners that focuses on the additional barriers that minoritised members of our community experience when reporting domestic abuse and seeking help from support services. This should include specialist training that addresses the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+, black and global majority, disabled, refugee and migrant, those with no recourse to public funds, male and older survivors of domestic abuse. In

addition, we will ensure that all training addresses the additional barriers and challenges created by so called honour abuse, forced marriage, financial, economic and sexual abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour;

- Equip staff and practitioners to be able to explore and challenge behaviour which may be harmful, and may put others at risk of abuse or death.

The principles of trauma informed practice are safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural competency, empathically exploring the question of ‘what’s happened to you’, as opposed to ‘what is wrong with you’. We will consider trauma through an intersectional lens, understanding that people have different layers of need and identity, that contribute to their unique experience and needs.

## Preventing Escalation of Abusive Behaviours

People who perpetrate through abusive behaviours cause significant harm to others. To stop abuse from occurring, recurring, or escalating we need to directly address the root causes.

People perpetrating abusive behaviours may themselves have experienced or witnessed abuse and they can be at increased risk of suicide, as a partnership, we will take a multi-agency approach to safeguarding and support services. We need interventions in place to support the person while challenging and disrupting the abusive behaviour.

Education helps people to define abuse and to challenge behaviours and attitudes linked to abusive behaviour.

To reduce the escalation of abusive behaviours we will:

- Continue to address misogyny as one of the root cause of domestic abuse and continue to work closely with those who work and interact with young people to tackle the significant impact that misogyny can have, both on the personal and social development of young people, and the wider consequences for society;
- Work across communities to promote positive behaviours and challenge harmful gendered stereotyping; ensuring the boys and men are part of the conversation and are empowered to be changemakers amongst their peers, and wider society;
- support work on bystander and upstander interventions;
- Work with the Prevent teams to better understand links between extremism, incels and domestic abuse;
- Consider multi-agency responses to perpetrators who have multiple, compound needs.
- Consider possibilities for the commissioning of early intervention work with those perpetrating domestic abuse.

## Support for Everyone

What do we mean by Support for everyone?

By 'support for everyone', we mean services and interventions that support, are available, and accessible to all victims while domestic abuse is occurring and in the immediate period after.

These services should help with managing risk and increasing safety and supporting people with practical issues such as access to housing, finance and accessing support for children. Support may take place in the community, or whilst someone is living in safe accommodation, and is delivered by a variety of statutory, and voluntary sector partners.

All experiences of abuse are individual. This Strategy is committed to the provision of high quality, joined up support, trauma informed responses where people feel heard, understood and believed, and service that are tailored to individual need, particularly where individuals face additional barriers to accessing support. The landscape of service provision should also include 'by and for', services that serve specific communities, provided by members of that community.

## Reducing Barriers to Accessing Support

The needs assessment highlighted a need for further specialist services that are tailored to diverse characteristics. The Partnership will work to ensure that services meet the needs of our diverse communities; recognising that people's experiences, trauma, support needs, and recovery journeys are different.

Ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and age can affect the risk of experiencing domestic abuse, the experience and abusive tactics used, and sometimes, the support people are able to access.

Some individuals and communities may face multiple and intersecting barriers to support. This can in turn result in the over or under representation of people facing these inequalities within our support services.

People experiencing multiple disadvantage, may have multiple, compound needs which are often underpinned by a history of abuse.

To respond to need we should ensure that services are equipped to support people who experience barriers to support effectively.

Domestic abuse can manifest differently across different relationships, and bias, including unconscious bias can influence how we perceive a situation.

Professionals must understand unconscious bias and challenge bias or assumptions which may stereotype a 'victim' or a 'perpetrator'.

Understanding of abuse must be evidence based and all professionals should utilise standardised assessment tools and safeguarding frameworks, such as MARAC protocols alongside their professional knowledge, experience and curiosity.

There are many reasons why somebody may not report abuse, and experience barriers to accessing help and support. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Challenge in recognising or identifying the behaviour as abusive
- Feelings of embarrassment or shame
- Being afraid of the repercussions of speaking out
- Being unsure if services are able to support them
- Fear of real or perceived racism
- Fear of real or perceived transphobia or homophobia
- Fear of experienced not being understood

---

*'It really meant a lot to me to have the option of working with a service that specifically understood me as a person, and my needs. It made me feel safe and comfortable, so that I could really open up about what had been happening.'*

---

## Safe Accommodation

To support those who need to flee abuse and seek support in safe accommodation, we will:

- Have safe accommodation and support options that meet the needs of anyone experiencing domestic abuse. This includes ethnicity, religious beliefs, support for those with disabilities, support for those with alcohol or substance misuse support needs, support for those with mental health needs, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Ensure safe accommodation options for all family types, including those with older male children and larger families are available;
- Increase awareness of options for support where people may own assets, or otherwise have no recourse to public funds;
- Recognise the importance of pets for some who are needing to flee domestic abuse. We will work to increase awareness of housing options and support services, alongside the provision of safe accommodation that allows survivors to remain with their pets;

- Recognise that some individuals experiencing abuse will be homeowners, for some this may limit their accommodation options. We will work to raise awareness of the available support routes for homeowners.

To ensure that services are able to respond and meet the needs of our diverse population we will:

- Increase service uptake for under-represented groups by seeking to address barriers to access and improve accessibility of services;
- Reduce barriers to access for those living in rural communities;
- Strengthen links with community groups, faith groups and leaders to expand on opportunities for partnership work;
- Services should be clearly promoted across the county, including utilising non digital means of promotion, with a focus on community-based settings, such as GP surgeries, libraries and community hubs. The Safe Space online directory should be more widely promoted, and the website kept up to date with current countywide service offers. This directory should also be made available in printed format, in a range of languages and distributed to faith leaders and community groups and should also be made available in braille at all libraries across the county;
- Explore ways to promote learning and development on issues around intersectionality, Promoting the expertise, knowledge and benefits of by and for services;
- Work to increase access for those experiencing multiple barriers by using a multi-agency approach to support the work of our commissioned domestic abuse services, including the introduction of multi-agency meetings, services and panels specifically designed to amplify and meet the needs of those with multiple, compound needs;
- Continue to explore support options, both community based, and in safe accommodation, for survivors with no recourse to public funds.

## Reducing Risk

Domestic abuse takes multiple forms and there are many factors that influence risk, including, but not exclusively, the abuser's history, including previous domestic abuse, stalking and other forms of violence, recent separation from the person perpetrating abuse, pregnancy or recent pregnancy and barriers to reporting to police or accessing support services.

Research published by Professor Jane Monckton-Smith has evidenced an 8 stage timeline of events before a domestic abuse or stalking related homicide takes place. More information on the homicide timeline can be found [here](#).

To keep people safe, risk must be understood, identified at the earliest opportunity, managed and where possible reduced. To support the best management of risk we will:

- Review our Pan Sussex multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) protocols to strengthen our response to the highest risk domestic abuse cases;
- Work with the Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Boards to ensure that learnings from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Children's Safeguarding Practice reviews are shared, supported and implemented;
- Review and embed learning the commissioned evaluation our multi-agency tasking and coordination (MATAC) meetings, held to address the behaviour of high risk perpetrators;
- Identify and strengthen mechanisms to ensure that where a person is perpetrating abusive behaviour, work together to ensure timely information sharing about abusive incidents that allows for risk management and coordinated actions that promote accountability and disrupt behaviours;
- Support, strengthen and monitor via the DA partnership board processes in place to notify both the person who has experienced the abuse and professionals to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place prior to prison release dates;
- Increase availability and access to programmes aiming to support people perpetrating abusive behaviour to make sustainable change in their relationships;
- Female perpetrator programmes, and programmes that address the behaviours of perpetrators in same sex/gender relationships should be explored;
- Increase the awareness of harassment and stalking, promoting specialist services and utilising expertise to strengthen multi agency responses.

## Supporting Children and Young People

Children who experience abuse between their caregivers are victims of abuse in their own right.

Services that are designed to specifically meet the needs of young people are critically important.

Many professionals will come into contact with children that are victims of domestic abuse, highlighting the need, and opportunity, for multi-agency response and intervention.

When we become aware that abuse is occurring and a child or young person has been present during an incident, information needs to be shared with the right people, at the earliest opportunity, so that every opportunity is available to support the child or young person, and keep them safe.

Young people can also experience or use abusive behaviours within their own relationships, and ensuring that there is appropriate support and information available for young people is vital.

Where families have separated, many children and young people may be navigating relationships between parents. Many children that have experienced domestic abuse within their family homes will experience trauma responses, requiring specialist support to recover.

Children and young people's voices and experiences are crucial in developing strong responses. We will:

- Ensure that children's voices and experiences are represented through the Voices of Lived Experience Board;
- Provide support and expertise to schools in supporting children and young people by providing information on healthy relationships, and ensuring that they are safe spaces for children to make disclosures;
- Continue to develop and monitor the impact of whole family support via statutory and voluntary sector organisations;
- Ensure that there is a consistent provision of specialist support available to children and young people across the county, residing in safe accommodation and in community services;
- Continue to improve the process for sharing domestic abuse notifications to schools, via Operation Encompass, ensuring that Operation Encompass responses are regularly reviewed and evaluated;
- Work with professionals within the statutory and voluntary sector to ensure that the children of migrant survivors, those seeking asylum and survivors with no recourse to public funds are visible within the system, and that equitable responses are delivered.

---

***'Everyone should have the option of doing the recovery course. It was fun, and I made friends with other people that really get it. My relationship with my mum is better, I understand her better and she understands me.'***

---

## Experience of the Criminal Justice System

For those experiencing domestic abuse the decision to report offences to the police or to seek help from services can be difficult and worrying. It is clear that survivors want to be listened to, taken seriously and believed – from the first time that they disclose the abuse. Survivors want their abuser to be held accountable, and they want to be included in what happens next. Too often, survivors described being let down by 'the system' and left feeling that they had not experienced the justice that they had wanted.

To strengthen experiences of the criminal justice system we will:

- Increase professional training on understanding coercive and controlling behaviour to support the gathering evidence and increase conviction rates;

- Advocate for greater specialist domestic abuse support for those who are going through the criminal justice system, ensuring that survivors are able to fully benefit from enhancements, rights and protections afforded to them via the [Victims' Code](#);
- Hold those using abusive behaviours to account through the criminal justice system, this includes exploring and offering help to change behaviours through effective interventions;
- Use expertise to provide institutional advocacy where survivors report feeling let down by services of the police;
- Ensure that the Crown prosecution Service are represented on the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board knowledge and good practice is shared and that concerns can be raised and escalated at the earliest opportunity;
- Collect data to monitor black and global majority experiences of the criminal justice system to identify and respond to inequality at the earliest opportunity.

---

*'I feel like the criminal justice system really let me down. Waiting for months on end was stressful and took over my whole life, I think the system needs to provide better support to victims and to really understand the impact that it has. No wonder so many people don't want to go there.'*

---

## Housing

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced changes which impact housing authorities. The Act now extends priority need status to all those who are eligible for assistance and homeless as a result of domestic abuse. This will mean that housing authorities no longer need to consider if a person is vulnerable as a result of their abuse in order for them to access accommodation secured by the local authority. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places requirements on housing authorities in relation to security of tenure when rehousing people fleeing domestic abuse who were an existing lifetime social tenant. The Act emphasises that support is available to all those fleeing abuse, including those who cross local authority borders, and that housing and support needs for adults and children fleeing abuse should be met irrespective of whether they have stayed close to home or moved to another authority.

If a person is forced to leave their home to find safety, access to a safe place for themselves and their children (if they have them) is paramount. If a person is forced to leave without their children, it is important that their accommodation is safe and is a place that their children can visit. Once a person is ready, it is also important that they have support to gain secondary or move on accommodation so they can leave safe accommodation at a time which is right for them.

To strengthen our housing response, we will:



- Continue to work closely across our services to understand need and demand for housing for those fleeing domestic abuse, including children;
- Continue to monitor, evaluate and draw on expertise and learning from housing IDVA roles, that strengthen the housing response including options for specialised referral and support routes;
- Ensure that accommodation and support options appropriate for the needs of domestic abuse survivors with multiple compound needs will be explored, and commissioned including short-term respite facilities, specialist housing, move-on pathways, and long-term floating support;
- Support and accessibility for disabled victims/survivors in safe accommodation should be improved, by introducing relevant training, multi-agency in-reach teams where needed, developing new facilities or adapting existing facilities, with measures such as installing ramps, increasing ground-floor and step-free units and installing visual fire alarms to assist deaf people;
- Ensure that improvement is made to the standard of emergency accommodation on offer across Sussex. To ensure consistently acceptable and appropriate standards of accommodation offered, a housing charter should be developed for each local authority, detailing the standards that providers are expected to deliver, and maintain. The charter should include clear routes and outcomes for managing complaints. This process should be monitored regularly;
- DAHA accreditation should be considered by all providers. DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. By becoming DAHA accredited, housing providers and services are taking a stand to ensure they deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse;
- Ensure that every form of domestic abuse safe accommodation that accepts children is suitable for their needs, offering specialised, personalised and holistic support for children and young people, including those with disabilities and protected characteristics, that recognises children and young people as victims in their own right, and provides accessible, age appropriate recovery provision;
- Commissioners to work alongside survivors and by and for services to ensure that minoritised survivors have safe accommodation that is accessible to them, and meets their needs. Survivor feedback indicated a shortage of suitable safe accommodation for those with disabilities, including learning disabilities and neurodiversity, older survivors, male survivors and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survivors. This should be considered alongside local commissioning opportunities;
- Responses are consistent for migrant survivors of domestic abuse, with strong, multi-agency approaches to responding to disclosures and meeting the needs of migrant survivors. There

should not be a delay in providing services where English is not the survivors first language;

- Inconsistencies and gaps in sanctuary schemes across the county are addressed; Victims/survivors should be able to remain in their home if they choose to, and it is safe to do so, by ensuring sanctuary schemes are available in all local authority areas as part of a wider support and safety package;
- A broader spectrum of accommodation is considered across the county, to reduce inequalities in relation to service offers. Consideration of alternative safe space models that meet the needs of minoritised communities and self-contained accommodation is recommended. Where it is not possible to bridge the gaps in provision, strengthening relationships across the partnership should be prioritised to ensure that marginalised survivors are able to access safe accommodation close to support networks, where safe to do so.

---

*‘The emergency accommodation was not suitable at all. I’m so lucky that I had an IDVA to raise the issues for me – eventually I was found somewhere else. Honestly, though, the conditions were so bad that if I had had to stay, I would have been forced to return to my abuser.’*

---

---

*‘The refuge that I stayed in truly saved my life. It was like the beginning of a new chapter, a safe space to heal and start my recovery journey. I had such good support from the staff – me and my children look back on our time in refuge and we are just so grateful for the care and support we experienced.’*

---

## Recovery

What do we mean by recovery? The effects of domestic abuse, and associated trauma are far reaching, and long lasting, impacting survivors in many ways. There can be damaging long and short-term physical, mental, emotional, and psychological health impacts on adults and children. These effects can be felt long after immediate safety needs have been met.

We want Sussex to be a place where survivors and their children have the opportunity to recover from the harm, heal and develop resilience. We want people to thrive. Supporting the recovery of survivors and their children is a strategic priority for the partnership.

Recovery is not linear, and is a process as opposed to a single event. Everybody's recovery journey is personal and unique to them, meaning that everyone will have a different vision for what this looks like and how they would like to be supported to achieve this.

By prioritising supporting people to heal from the trauma of abuse, we are strengthening our commitment to the prevention of further abuse.

## Impact of Domestic Abuse on Mental Health

Many people impacted by domestic abuse will have mental health support needs. We also know that people using abusive behaviour are more likely to target those who may be more vulnerable due to their mental health needs.

Barriers range from shame and stigma to complicated service landscapes, rigid referral criteria, long waiting lists and a lack of services that can adequately support those with complex or multiple needs.

For groups facing additional forms of discrimination and inequality, these impacts can be compounded. Between 60 and 70% of women seeking mental health support have experienced domestic abuse. Despite this, feedback around the mental health response has highlighted a lack of pathways that are tailored to the needs of those recovering from abuse.

The needs assessment showed that the primary domestic abuse support services operate on a risk-based model, with less resource dedicated to recovery-based models.

Recognising this gap, and the intersectionality between domestic abuse and mental health support needs we will:

- Promote better understanding of domestic abuse and trauma-informed practice within mental healthcare settings;
- Develop mental health support that is responsive to the needs of people who have been impacted by abuse;
- Continue to strengthen understandings of suicide and domestic abuse, implementing learning through training and DARDR recommendations across the system;
- Explore and promote further service delivery models that look at the needs of a person as well as the risk posed to them by the person perpetrating abuse;
- Explore opportunities to provide clear pathways for people who would like support around abusive experiences that are no longer current or posing active risk;
- Increased provision of support groups, including survivor/peer lead support. Communities should be upskilled and empowered to create and sustain community-based support provision, including specific provision for male and LGBTQ+ survivors.
- Ensure that step down, and follow on support is offered in a variety of ways, for example, in person and digital meetings, allowing accessibility for all survivors. This includes supporting

initiatives that offer recovery support to those where English is not their first language, those with additional support needs, including neurodiversity.

---

*‘For me, it was the support group that made the most difference. I learned so much from the group, and it gave me focus, especially on the bad days, just knowing I wasn’t alone. I got my confidence back, and it gave me the change to build my own support network, which I never had before.’*

---

---

*‘As a male survivor, I feel that accessing recovery support has been difficult for me. There is nothing on offer for me really, and even working 1:1 with a domestic abuse service, I felt like initially I was viewed with suspicion. I would like to see male only groups and therapy on offer’.*

---

## Promoting Connections and Processing Trauma

To promote connection and support survivors to process trauma we will:

- Work to ensure there is an equitable and accessible group work service across Sussex for adults and children, promoting joined up delivery, co production and co-design;
- Seek to deliver groups collaboratively in a wide range of settings to ensure accessibility;
- Support initiatives that help people build confidence and grow their positive social support networks;
- Continue to explore programmes that allow people to remain safely in their own community networks;
- Ensure that survivor voices and lived experience are central to commissioning decisions relating to recovery.

## Strengthening and Supporting Families

Domestic abuse can both directly and indirectly disrupt the relationship between a parent and their child and between family members. Supporting all members of the family to process their experiences and rebuild strong healthy relationships is a crucial part of recovery.

The non-abusive parent’s needs must be seen alongside their children’s needs. Children who have experienced abuse can mimic disruptive behaviours, undermining the non-abusive parents’ ability to

cope. We also know that the largest predictor of future victimization and perpetration is experiencing or witnessing abuse in the past.

Intergenerational risk can be mitigated by supporting parents and children to recover together. Giving parents and children coordinated support after abuse is important in creating strong recovery outcomes, which are themselves a form of prevention.

Many children who have experienced abuse will continue to have contact with the abusive parent. In some situations, it may also be appropriate to work with the person using abusive behaviour to facilitate healthier parenting and safer co-parenting.

We must work together to prioritise children's emotional and physical safety, as well as the safety of the non-abusive parent.

To strengthen and support families:

- Promote integrated support for the child/ren and the non-abusive parent, investigating options for whole family support, addressing needs of the individual and of the family unit;
- Explore providing services that support parenting after experiencing abuse;
- Explore services that aim to increase the safety of children by supporting the abusive person as an individual and as a parent, increasing their insight into the impact of their behaviours, whilst holding them accountable for the abuse;
- Promoting professional training on the use of counter allegations, misuse of family court and safe child contact arrangements.

---

*'The whole family work that we did with children's services was amazing. I feel much more empowered as a parent and the whole family dynamic is so much better now. I can be the parent I want to be and I know my children and I have a strong relationship. I owe a lot to our IDVA and the group, it's changed our lives for the better'.*

---

## Economic Independence

Financial and economic abuse is a pattern of coercing and controlling behaviour that dominates a partner or family member's ability to acquire, use and maintain financial resources.

For many people affected by domestic abuse the impact of abuse can drastically alter their financial situation which may include losing homes or tenancies, property loss or damage. The effects of economic abuse may include unemployment, diminished employment prospects, debt, or coerced debt. This can lead to long-term consequences and can severely limit long-term economic stability and financial independence.

Financial and economic abuse can lead to feelings of disempowerment, creating dependence on the abuser for every day tasks and resources.

The impact of financial and economic control and abuse can compromise a person's stability and safety, often forcing them to remain in the abusive situation.

We will:

- Increase the recognition of financial and economic abuse as a factor in domestic abuse with professionals, including who are working with older people or people who have care needs;
- Work to establish clear support for people who have experienced economic abuse and who have left, or are contemplating leaving an abusive relationship or situation; expanding areas of good practice, such as working with recognised, national experts and services;
- Provide education and awareness to help people recognise the features of economic abuse and its long term impacts;
- Promote access to financial advocacy for people who have experienced abuse;
- Work with employers to make sure the workplace is a safe space for people who have experienced abuse;
- Increase awareness of specialist support offered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to those who have experienced abuse.

---

*'By getting specialist support around my finances, from a specialist domestic abuse service, I finally feel like I can be fully independent. I realise now that losing all control of my finances, and financial choices was part of the abuse – I feel stronger and more in control of my life. Everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from this kind of support. You will never be judged, only helped and supported.'*

---

## Valuing Lived Experience

People who are living or have lived through abusive experiences, provide unique insight and expertise. Valuing their voice and lived experience is at the heart of what we do.

Our strategic priorities will be led by the voices of those who have experienced abuse. This strategy and the commitments we are making reflect these experiences.

The writing of this strategy would not have been possible without the Voices Of Lived Experience Board, and the many other survivors, some, who are also working as professionals in this space, sharing their thoughts, ideas, feedback and time.

We want to say thank you to those that have helped. Without you, the writing of this strategy would not have been possible. Without you, we cannot make it meaningful. Together, we can.

Rebuilding identity and empowerment are important factors in recovering from the experiences of abuse. Allowing space for people to grow and to input into the systems and services that they have been a part of should be prioritised.

Offering opportunities to contribute to peer support services, giving access to training and employment is empowering, builds confidence and supports recovery. Additionally providing opportunities for the services and structures offering support to benefit from these expertise.

We will:

- Recognise the importance of peer-support programmes and interventions that work with the local community and informal networks;
- continue to be led by experts by experience in our services and governance structures, promoting greater service user involvement in co design, co delivery and policy making;
- Ensure that the Voices of Loved Experience Board remains in integral part of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board structure;
- Ensure that children and young people's lived experiences are recognised, heard and acted upon.

## How We Will Measure Success

This is a five-year strategy which embodies our approach to tackling domestic abuse across Sussex.

Every five years, the strategy will be reviewed and refreshed to ensure that our strategic priorities are still appropriate to the needs of survivors and their children in our communities.

The Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will oversee local delivery plans managed by local governance structures with regular updates on progress being made to the Partnership.

In addition to monitoring delivery of this strategy, we will use a number of activity indicators to monitor areas of activity. Alongside this, we are developing a Pan Sussex data dashboard, where data relevant to our strategic ambitions will be scrutinised at quarterly Partnership Board Meetings.

We will analyse quantitative measurements alongside qualitative learning from reviews and evaluations which can help us identify progress and build a full picture.

Our Voices of Lived Experience Board will provide feedback and insight using our thematic work areas, and will continue to both shape and drive the work of the DA Partnership Board.