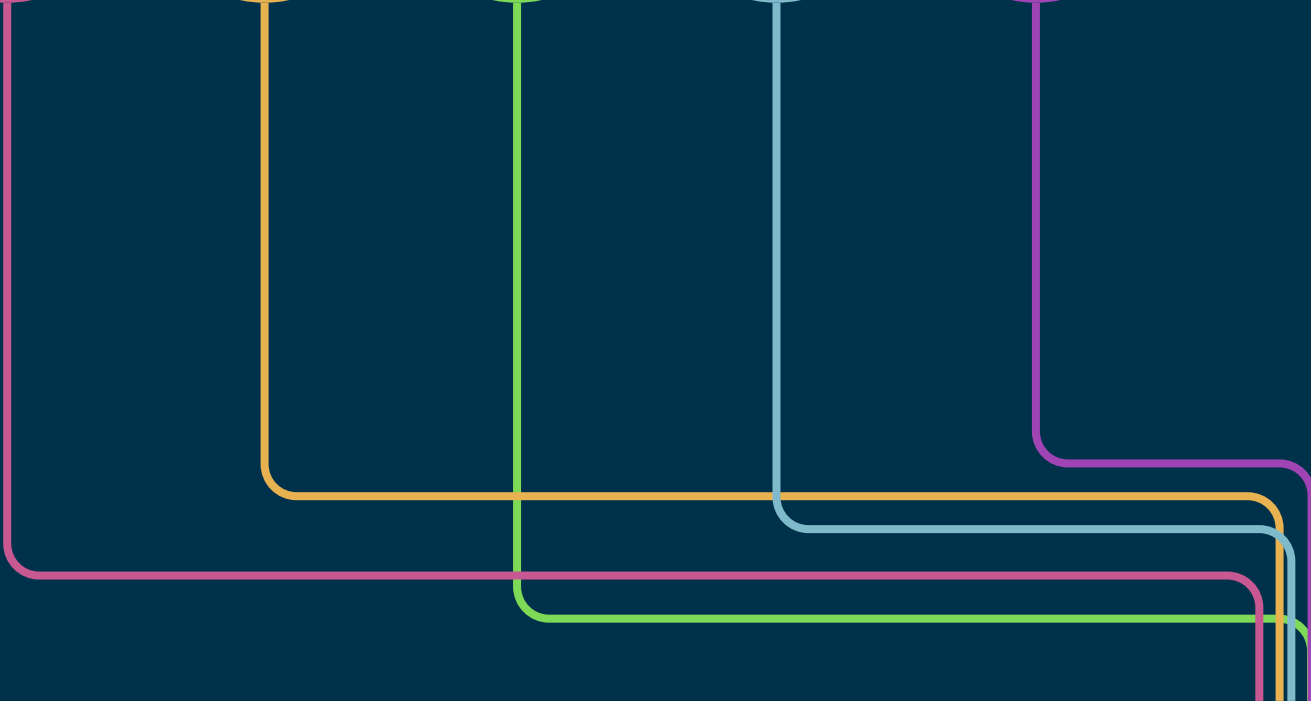


**TEES-WIDE
TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE
PERPETRATION STRATEGY
2025 - 2035**



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ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This strategy has been developed collaboratively, with support and input from a wide range of partners, with feedback invited through a range of existing partnerships and victim-survivor service user groups across Tees. We want to particularly acknowledge the support of our local domestic abuse providers, experts by experience, and the four domestic abuse coordinators from the local authority areas across Tees who have significantly supported the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in developing this strategy.

The strategy and a Theory of Change[1] and Delivery Plan, co-produced by partners including experts by experience at a co-design workshop, will be reviewed and refreshed annually. The delivery of this strategy will be coordinated by the OPCC and overseen by a strategic level multi-agency delivery group who will meet regularly, to ensure accountability, system-wide collaboration and alignment with broader strategies and action plans. An annual performance report will be presented to Cleveland's Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) who will provide governance for the strategy.

The duration of the strategy will cover 10 years and align with the commitment made by government in 2024 to halve violence against women and girls over the next decade.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020/21, alongside the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021)[2] and the national Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG)[3], the government committed to publish a national perpetrator strategy [4] to set out its commitment and approach to:

- Detecting, investigating, and prosecuting domestic abuse offences
- Assessing and managing the risks posed by individuals who commit domestic abuse offences, including domestic abuse related stalking
- Reducing the risk of repeat domestic abuse offences

At the current time, Spring 2025, a national perpetrator strategy remains unpublished. When the national strategy is available, we will cross-reference with our Tees-wide strategy.

In recent years, domestic abuse has created significant and increasing demand on agencies across Tees, this has resulted in recognition of the need for the current local partnership arrangements around domestic abuse to reflect the efficiencies that could be realised from a more joined-up approach at a Tees-wide level.

Throughout 2023/4, Cleveland OPCC, supported by Tees Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) coordinated discussions between senior representatives from a range of agencies, and held an event which brought senior partners together[5] to explore the appetite for a single strategic level Tees-wide Domestic Abuse Board.

These discussions failed to reach consensus for a single Tees-wide Strategic Board, this was specifically influenced by the statutory requirement placed on local authorities to convene local level Strategic Domestic Abuse Partnerships.[6]

However, subsequent discussions between the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cleveland Police, and leaders within the four Local Authorities reached an agreement to collaborate at a Tees-wide level on two key themes: the existing Tees-wide Strategic Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Partnership, and through the development of a Tees-wide Tackling Perpetration Strategy, to be facilitated by the OPCC, to provide coordination across partnership forums regarding our system-wide response to tackling domestic abuse across Tees.

Our vision is for all adults and children in Teesside to be safe from the harm, fear and control associated with domestic abuse.

We will work together to achieve this by tackling identified perpetrators, and by addressing issues prevalent in the contexts in which perpetration is able to thrive.

This includes raising awareness of, and challenging the systemic contributors, and societal attitudes and cultures that enable domestic abuse to occur and endure within our homes and communities[7]. We will hold perpetrators to account, bring more perpetrators to justice, and resource upstream activities[8]. We will be informed by research, evidence-based approaches, victim-survivor voices, experts by experience, and specialist agencies.

This strategy will work towards enabling all sectors, organisations, and communities to share responsibility for addressing the perpetration of domestic abuse through a theory of change and delivery plan which focuses on, prevention, early intervention, and disruption of perpetrators, to better protect victims and communities.

NATIONAL DATA AND LOCAL CONTEXT

All data covers the 12-month period ending March 2024. Local data covers Cleveland Police Force Area (Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland).

Domestic Abuse Prevalence

2.3m

people aged 16 or over were victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales in the last year

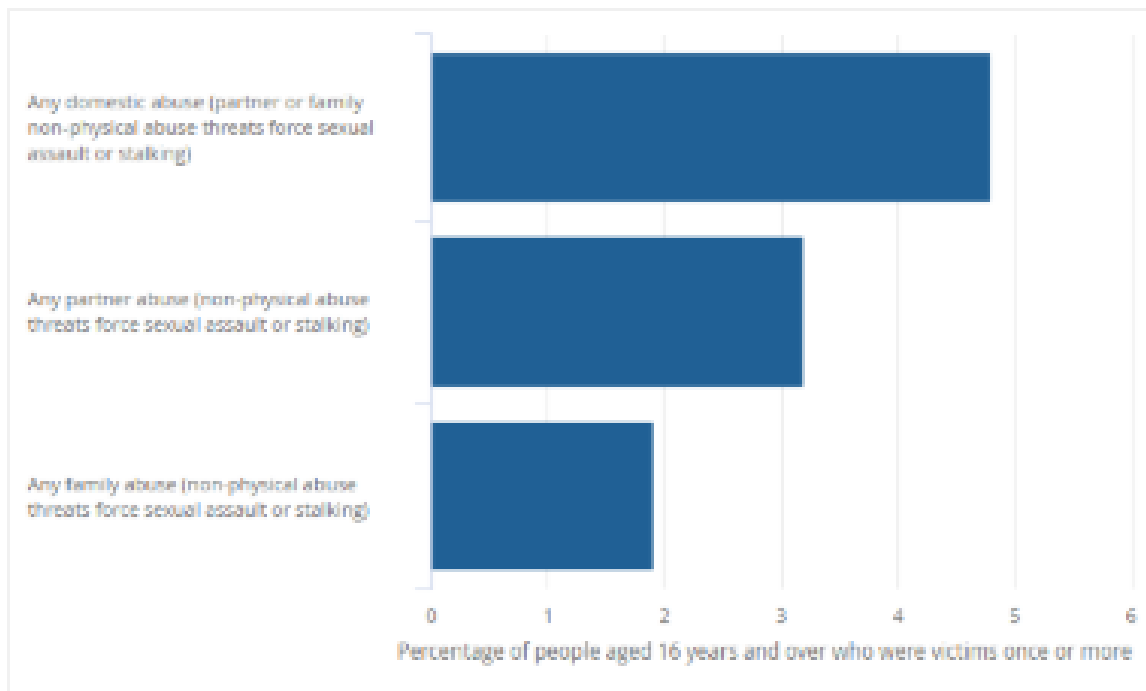
1.6m

females

712,000

males

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for people aged 16 and over, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending March 2024



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

Cleveland Profile

HIGHEST

rate of domestic abuse related crimes

20,311

domestic abuse related incidents and crimes were recorded

3RD HIGHEST

rate of domestic abuse related stalking and harassment

4,052

domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DISCLOSURE SCHEME (ENGLAND AND WALES)

Clare's law

Right to Know

Empowers police to proactively disclose information about past history of violence if they believe someone is at risk

19,934

applications in England and
Wales

1,284

'Right to Know' applications
made under the DVDS in
Cleveland

40.2%

of 'Right to Know' applications in
Cleveland resulted in a
disclosure

Right to Ask

Allows individuals to request information about a partner's past history of violence

38,678

'Right to Ask' applications
made in England and
Wales

42.1%

of 'Right to Ask' applications resulted in a
disclosure in England and Wales

814

'Right to Ask' applications
made in Cleveland

39.7%

of 'Right to Ask' applications resulted in a
disclosure in Cleveland

Domestic Violence Protection Orders - Cleveland

Police and Magistrates powers to ban a DA perpetrator from returning to their home or having contact with the victim for up to 28 days.

223

DVPOs applied for in Cleveland

198 (88%)

DVPOs were granted in Cleveland

Domestic Homicide

Domestic Homicide Reviews - National

Up to year ending 31 March 2024

85
women killed

25
men killed

54%
of suspects of domestic
homicide were previously known
to police as perpetrators of
domestic abuse

Domestic Homicide Reviews - Cleveland

*10 DHRs have been published in Cleveland for deaths that occurred
between 2012 and 2019*

Victims

9 out of 10
victims were females aged
between 26 and 66-years old

50%
were aged between 26 and
40-years old

70%
of victims had previously
been in an intimate
relationship with the
perpetrator

Perpetrators

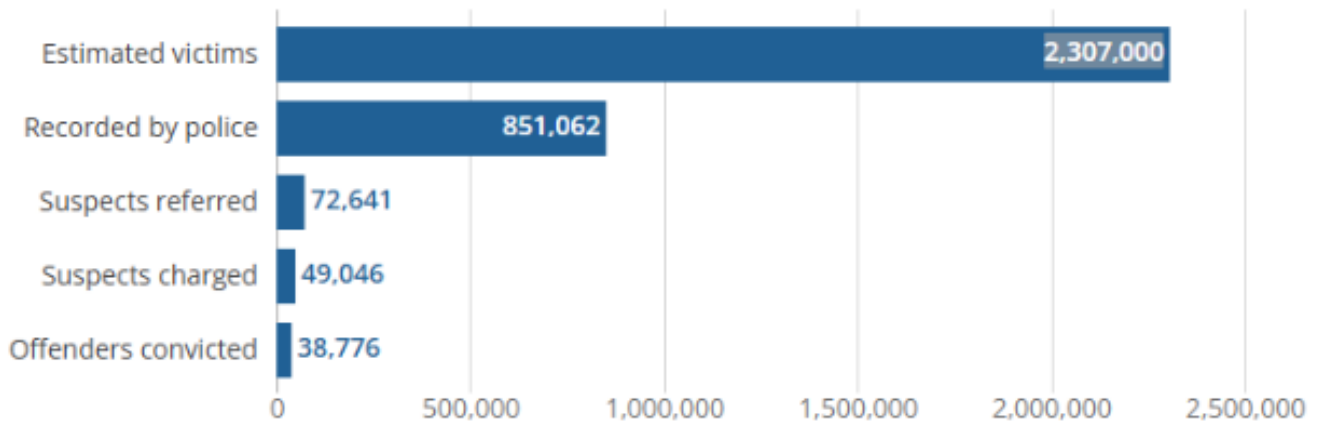
9 out of 10
victims were males aged
between 18 and 65-years-old

50%
were aged between 26 and
40-years old

30%
of perpetrators were the son
or daughter of the victim

Criminal Justice Response

Domestic abuse data from incident to conviction, England and Wales, year ending March 2024



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics, Police recorded crime data from the Home Office, and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Cleveland Police

35

arrests made per 100 crimes

12TH LOWEST

percentage of domestic abuse-related decisions which result in a charge

981

domestic abuse related prosecutions

747

domestic abuse related convictions

4.4%

convictions are secured per 100 recorded domestic abuse related offences

DEFINITION AND IDENTIFICATION

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents between those aged 16 years and over who are or have been in a connected relationship – this includes:

- ***Partner or ex-partner***
- ***Relatives***
- ***Where they have, or has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.***

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) outlines the complexity and intersection between domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG), broadening the definition of harms experienced by victim-survivors.

Domestic abuse includes harmful behaviours including, but not limited to, homicide, physical and sexual violence, rape, coercive control[9], economic, verbal and psychological abuse, domestic abuse related stalking[10], non-fatal strangulation,[11] ‘so-called’ honour-based abuse[12] and illegal cultural harms[13] including, female genital mutilation (FGM)[14] and forced marriage[15].

The Act increases the scope of behaviours and actions that can be defined as domestic abuse, for the first time recognising threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (Revenge Pornography), and disallowing consent to serious harm for sexual gratification as a defence. The Act acknowledges that coercive control can be a pattern of behaviour with no physical injury element.

Some perpetrators do not recognise their attitudes and behaviours are abusive. Regardless of the contributory factors, all perpetrators should be held responsible and accountable for the harm they have caused.

Domestic abuse often occurs where the perpetrator is in, or creates, a more powerful position than the person who is being harmed. Abuse occurs when the perpetrator misuses such power either intentionally or unintentionally for their own benefit or gain. The perpetrator may assume more power, create more power, or have more power than the victim, the perpetrator may also be an adult at risk.[16] Some perpetrators will deliberately seek out partners who are vulnerable so that they can exploit or manipulate this.

Domestic abuse is a high-volume crime but perpetrators are not all the same – their behaviours, motivation and level of risk towards victim-survivors can be broadly explained by a range of ‘typical perpetrator typologies’. [17]

Perpetrators may be male or female (including trans and non-binary individuals), although consistently, world-wide statistics evidence that domestic abuse is a gendered issue affecting victim-survivors who are predominantly female and perpetrators who are predominantly male.

We recognise the nuance around victims’ under-reporting, challenges around recording and statistical data, and acknowledge that males can be victims, perpetrators can be female, and that the dynamics of relationally ‘connected persons’ as defined within the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) includes, same-sex perpetration and victimisation and, in the context of illegal cultural harms, may involve more than one perpetrator[18] per victim-survivor. [19]

Perpetrators and victims represent every section of society, social class, and includes those with or without protected characteristics.[20] Where victims or perpetrators have a protected characteristic, consideration should be given to intersectionality[21], the experiences and treatment of those with multiple layers of inequality, disadvantage and discrimination. This requires appropriate assessment to ensure that any interventions are responsive to the risk, need, and responsivity of the individual when considering the best approach to supporting achievable and sustainable change.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises children under 18 years as victims, it does not recognise those under the age of 16-years as perpetrators. We acknowledge that children and young people can, and do, harm others with whom they are in relationship including, child to parent/care-givers (CAPVA) [22], siblings, and those with whom they are having, or perceive they are in intimate relationship with. The coercive control, stalking and subsequent murder of Holly Newton, a victim from the North East of England, by a male who was 15-years old when harm to Holly started, and only 16-years old when he murdered her, together with the numbers of young people accessing domestic abuse victim support services related to adolescent intimate-partner violence, highlights the need for us to include children and young people in the scope of this strategy.

We will not refer to children and young people as perpetrators but recognise the need to intervene and support children and young people at the earliest opportunity. The contributory factors that influence children and young people's behaviour is complex and nuanced.[23] Therefore our response to children and young people must consider, adverse childhood experiences and the contexts and environments of their behaviour, be age-appropriate, trauma-informed, and avoid labelling and/or adultifying [24] children and young people recognising that brain development and maturation is incomplete.

We recognise the role of communities and the diverse range of roles and specialist skills of individual agencies. We will promote the need to ensure appropriate safeguarding and ensure whosoever is engaged with children and young people is able to access the most appropriate support for children and young people - through awareness of children's support pathways and an awareness of the need for formal interventions for children and young people, to be identified and delivered by an appropriately skilled children's workforce.

OUR VISION

For all adults and children in Teesside to be safe from the harm, fear and control associated with domestic abuse.

OUR APPROACH

In 2024 The National Police Chief's Council declared domestic abuse a national epidemic[25] that cannot be addressed by any single organisation or approach. The government responded by committing to halve Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) within a decade.[26] Our aim is to partner with this commitment recognising that this is an ambitious target which requires long-term and system-wide support and collaboration.

We will commit to reducing domestic abuse, and the harm caused by its prevalence, by increasing the visibility of perpetrators within our collective work to tackle domestic abuse perpetration, and by addressing the conditions and attitudes that enable it to continue. How we work together will be critical to our ability to do this.

Our approach will be based upon the Coordinated Community Response (CCR)[27] which recognises that structures, policies, adequate resourcing, and integrated interventions are critical.

This will require us to value the collective role and shared responsibility of individuals, communities, organisations and government. We need to shift the responsibility for the safety of victim-survivors from those being harmed to those perpetrating harm, and to recognise the multiple layers of systemic and cultural issues that enable perpetration to endure.

We recognise the need to collaborate to deliver our strategy through harm prevention, intervention at the earliest opportunity, and targeted interventions for more entrenched perpetration that promotes sustainable behaviour change and victim safety. We will ensure our collective response to delivering our strategy objectives is inclusive, considers diversity and is anti-discriminatory.

We will hold perpetrators wholly responsible for abusive and controlling behaviour, our approach to perpetrator interventions will be delivered through a strengths-based, person-centred and trauma-informed lens,[28] ensuring support for change is responsive to the risk, needs and responsivity of individual perpetrators.

We will work with partners to identify options and available powers to pursue, disrupt and hold perpetrators to account. We will ensure perpetrator interventions adhere to Home Office Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions[29] and the Respect Outcomes Framework[30] whilst always ensuring the safety of victim-survivors accompanies work with perpetrators. We will include victim-survivor voices, and those with lived experience support co-design of activities and inform our decisions.

Our vision: “For all adults and children in Teesside to be safe from the harm, fear and control associated with domestic abuse.”

Priorities

Prevent



- People experience safe, healthy and secure relationships.
- Harmful attitudes and behaviours are challenged.
- Information and support is available across many settings.
- Tackling perpetration is a shared responsibility.

Protect



- Victims-survivors are safer.
- Perpetrators are identified through routine enquiry.
- Support is available at the earliest opportunity.
- Interventions are risk-led and targeted.

Pursue



- Perpetrators are held accountable and brought to justice.
- Justice is served through positive and timely outcomes.
- Victim-survivor satisfaction levels are high.
- Perpetrators demonstrate sustainable change.

Outcomes

People



- Victim-survivor safety focused
- Risk-led
- Think family
- Cradle-to-grave inclusion

- Strengths-based and trauma informed

Objectives

Needs Assessment

We will use available data to better understand domestic abuse, its causes and perpetrator cohorts. Using this information, we will work with communities to identify solutions and make recommendations for how services can disrupt and tackle harmful behaviour.

Build Insights and Raise Awareness

We will seek to recognise how well domestic abuse and its causes are understood. We want to embed system-wide approaches to education, awareness and practice around abuse. We will use media campaigns and education to raise awareness of abuse and how to access support.

Build Skills, Capacity and Attributes in our Workforces

We will build workforces that are competent and confident in handling domestic abuse. We will develop toolkits for practitioners, embed system-wide training and optimise collaboration between agencies and sectors.

Develop and Support the Criminal Justice System Response

We will work together to deliver an effective and efficient criminal justice system to bring perpetrators to justice. We will ensure perpetrators are managed, through the use of protective measures and interventions to address perpetration and its causes.

Partnership



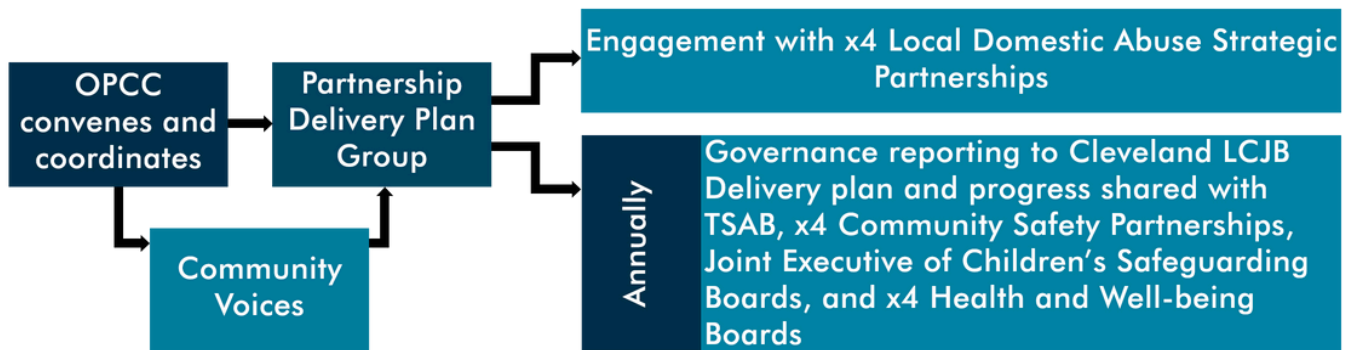
- Coordinated community response
- Multi-agency working
- Collaborative commissioning
- Co-produced activities and service design

IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

Governance for the strategy will be provided by Cleveland Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). We will deliver our strategy incrementally through a theory of change and strategic delivery plan, co-produced with victim-survivors and system-wide partners.

These will be developed and refreshed annually, overseen by a strategic level multi-agency group, chaired by the OPCC, to provide accountability for performance and progress of the strategy. An annual performance report will be presented to Cleveland LCJB and the four Tees locality based Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnerships.

Recognising that domestic abuse intersects with a wide range of other strategic partnerships, we will ensure communication with other partnerships to cross-reference any existing action plans in other settings to avoid duplication or adverse impacts on existing activities.[31] We will seek to collaborate, co-produce and co-commission with partners where appropriate. Our annual report will be provided to wider partnership forums across Tees as requested.



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

During the development of this strategy a wide range of literature and other documents have been accessed. Many of these will provide helpful guidance and toolkits to support practitioners engaging with domestic abuse across different settings.

Additional material to support the strategy, and new material that becomes available, will also be added to a single point of access for practitioners made available through the Tees Procedures Learning Portal.

Resources include:

- Theory of Change
- Delivery Plan and KPIs
- Domestic Abuse policy documents
- Practitioners Toolkit
- Case Studies

FOOTNOTES

[1] Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in an Outcomes Framework.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

[4] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/tackling-perpetrators>

[5] Cleveland OPCC held an event on 5 June 2024 between partners and strategic leaders with responsibility for DA across Tees to discuss appetite for a single strategic board to coordinate DA activity across the Cleveland Police Force area.

[6] Section 58 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) requires local authorities in England to appoint a domestic abuse local partnership board. The board's role is to advise the local authority on how to support victims of domestic abuse.

[7] Systemic failings are failures that affect multiple parts of a system, or that are caused by a widespread issue within an organisation or set of organisations. These can include policy weaknesses, under resourcing, unconscious bias, under prepared workforce etc.

[8] Upstream activities refer to proactive, preventive measures that address the root causes and societal factors contributing to domestic abuse perpetration. These activities aim to change cultural norms, policies, and social structures that enable abuse.

[9] Under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), coercive control is recognised as a form of domestic abuse and refers to a pattern of controlling, manipulative, or threatening behaviour that restricts a victim's freedom and independence.

[10] The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) includes harassment or stalking when the perpetrator and victim are 16 or over and “personally connected”. For example, it may constitute physical abuse, threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, or emotional or psychological abuse. There is no statutory definition of harassment, but it includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim, in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear. It is generally acknowledged that harassment involves behaviour that is intended to cause a person alarm or distress or to cause them to fear violence when the perpetrator knows or ought to know that their conduct amounts to harassment. Where there is evidence to show that such conduct has occurred on more than one occasion, the perpetrator could be prosecuted under the [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#).

FOOTNOTES

[11] The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) introduced a specific criminal offence for non-fatal strangulation (Section 70, effective from June 2022), recognising it as a distinct and serious form of domestic abuse. A person commits the offence if they intentionally strangle another person or otherwise affect their breathing (e.g. by suffocation or obstruction).

[12] <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/so-called-honour-based-abuse>

[13] The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) does not explicitly define "illegal cultural harms" as a standalone legal term. However, the Act recognises that domestic abuse can take many forms, including harmful cultural practices that contribute to coercive control, violence, and oppression within certain communities.

[14] <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

[15] <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

[16] Under the Care Act 2014, an "adult at risk" is defined as an individual who is aged 18 or over, has care and support needs (whether they receive support from a local authority or not), is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves from that abuse or neglect due to their care and support needs.

[17] An overview of perpetrator typologies and behaviours are available within the supporting documents to the strategy which are available to practitioners. Source: [\(PDF\) A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence by Michael P. Johnson](#)

[18] So called 'honour' based abuse (HBA) can include numerous family members exercising control over a victim.

[19] [The Istanbul Convention](#), ratified by the UK in 2022, acknowledges that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and requires gender-specific responses. [Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\)_\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

[20] The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

[21] Intersectionality is the concept that all oppression is linked. More explicitly, the [Oxford Dictionary](#) defines intersectionality as "the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage". Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression, and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc. First coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw back in 1989, intersectionality was added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2015 with its importance increasingly being recognised in the world of women's rights.

[22] There is no legal definition for Child/ Adolescence to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA), however it can be defined as a pattern of harmful, and in some cases, controlling, behaviour by children or adolescents towards parents or caregivers (Domestic Abuse Commissioner).

FOOTNOTES

[23] [Understanding violence in young people: explanations, approaches and resources](#)catch-22.org.uk

[24] While adultification is discussed across literature (Stephen, 1999; Burton, 2007; Goff, 2014; Ocen; 2015; Smitz and Tyler, 2016; Epstein et al., 2017), there is only one explanation which explicitly defines adultification in the context of children's rights. Davis and Marsh (2020) define adultification as: 'The concept of adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children. This is determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. When adultification occurs outside of the home it is always founded within discrimination and bias. There are various definitions of adultification, all relate to a child's personal characteristics, socio-economic influences and/or lived experiences. Regardless of the context in which adultification take place, the impact results in children's rights being either diminished or not upheld. [Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding](#)

[25] [Call to action as VAWG epidemic deepens](#)

[26] [New measures set out to combat violence against women and girls - GOV.UK](#)

[27] A CCR brings services together to ensure local systems truly keep victim-survivors safe, hold perpetrators to account and prevent domestic abuse. [What is a CCR? — Standing Together](#)

[28] Through a trauma-informed lens means to view a situation or interact with someone by actively considering the potential impact of past traumatic experiences, understanding how trauma can affect behaviour and responses.

[29] Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (accessible) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[30] Respect accreditation is a quality assurance certification for those working with perpetrators are assessed against the Respect Standard. Accreditation has been developed so that everyone, including perpetrators, survivors, funders, commissioners, and practitioners can be assured that a service is of a high-quality standard, regularly monitored and supported to frequently reflect and improve on best working practices.

[31] [Tees Partnership Arrangements](#)



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