

## MANCHESTER COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY (updated 2021)

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### **Foreword**

Domestic abuse is a serious issue, both nationally and here in Manchester. It has catastrophic and far-reaching consequences for the safety, health and wider life chances of victims, children, and families, and drives wider crises such as homelessness, mental ill health and financial exclusion.

For too long, domestic abuse has been a hidden crime, surrounded by stigma, shame and guilt. Domestic abuse should be everyone's business. In Manchester we continually strive to open up dialogue on the issue and respond to domestic abuse in a way which reflects our City's values.

Throughout the past four years our Delivering Differently Strategy has shaped the response to domestic abuse in Manchester. We have embarked on the culture change required to influence the behaviours of organisations and future generations. Our interventions have become increasingly trauma informed, collaborative and co-designed.

Culture change is organic, however, and whilst good progress is being made on many fronts, we recognise that there is still more to do and much more to learn in our efforts to reduce the risk, harm and enduring effects of domestic abuse.

Our vision for this multi-agency strategy is to build further as a city-wide partnership on the work we began under Delivering Differently. First and foremost, we want to help and support victims, in crisis and into recovery. We also, however, need to challenge and change the behaviour of those who inflict abuse, hold them to account and focus on their behaviour, to help break the cycle and reduce the likelihood of further incidents.

Where abuse is identified we need to respond in an effective, victim centred way to ensure those who are suffering receive the help and support they need and more crucially at exactly the time they need it.

We must also instil in our children and young people the value of healthy, positive, and respectful relationships.

Our aim through the lifespan of this Strategy is to ensure that women, their children and families, and all other victims across this City are free from fear, insecurity and harm so they are able to lead safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

**Councillor Joanna Midgley**  
**Executive Member for Health and Care**

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## Introduction

Domestic Abuse is defined as:

‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’. Honour - based violence and abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are all forms of domestic abuse and are encompassed and addressed within this strategy.

The Domestic Violence Act 2021 also for the first time legally recognises children who are related to the abused or abuser and who see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse as victims in their own right

This strategy is written on the premise that Domestic Abuse is typically a gendered crime with the vast majority of victims being women as a result of misogyny. Women are more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence (including sexual violence), and are also more likely to experience sustained physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. We are, however, acutely aware that domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, gender, race, religion or belief, socio-economic circumstances or any disability or limiting condition they may have, and that much of this abuse is under reported.

Every victim of domestic abuse, including those who are children, should be able to access and receive the support and services they need. Every perpetrator should be held fully accountable for the abuse they inflict, whilst also offering interventions that seek to end their abusive behaviour.

The strategy details how, over the next three years, we will work with our partners, businesses, communities and organisations to:

- establish measures to prevent abuse.
- support victims of domestic abuse, including child victims
- tackle the behaviour of perpetrators

The strategy reflects the valuable input we have received from a wide range of public sector partners, service providers, community and voluntary organisations. We have heard about the excellent work that they do every day and are rightly proud of, as well as some of the challenges and difficulties they face.

It has been especially important to us that the voices of victims and survivors have been central to our thinking in developing this strategy. We have engaged with and heard from a range of support groups and organisations, and with individual victims and survivors. These conversations have helped us to understand their experiences, issues, and challenges. We are immensely grateful to all those who have been willing to give us their time and share their journey, thoughts, and views.

The strategy has been produced in a time of considerable change, during the Covid pandemic, and in parallel with the journey of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 through Parliament. We set out in the following pages how we will implement the duties and responsibilities contained within the Act, and how we will work collectively to move from responding to the pandemic into long term and sustainable recovery.

We have made good progress since we launched the 'Delivering Differently' strategy in 2016 but know we still have much to do, in areas such as:

- upskilling agencies so that staff understand different types of abuse, particularly coercive control and post separation abuse, and know how to engage victims and promote the support options available.
- the need to tackle and change harmful perceptions and behaviours, particularly those of and towards women and girls.
- the impact of new domestic abuse legislation and policy on how partners and providers plan, fund, commission and deliver services and support
- the impact of the Covid pandemic on those affected by domestic abuse and the agencies and services that work with them

We have some strong foundations and strong traditions of effective partnership working. We will seek to further strengthen and develop our collective and collaborative approach as we move forward through the next four years. Our new strategy is a living document which will reflect the changing circumstances we are living and working in. We will ensure that our conversations and engagement continue, with victims, survivors, staff and partners, so that any further change or development of our approach is informed and driven by them.

“(I found it) very difficult to leave, even though I spoke to people... I did not believe it would be easy to leave so I stayed, and the abuse continued. After speaking to professionals, I was finally got the courage to leave”.

## The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – discharging our Safe Accommodation Duty

The Safe Accommodation Duty places upon local authorities several requirements, including:

- Provide support for victims and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- Appoint a multi-agency partnership board
- Conduct and produce a Needs Assessment
- Publish a strategy
- Ensure sufficient provision for minoritised groups, including disabled people, older people, male victims
- Report back to Government on progress

### **Our Needs Assessment tells us that:**

- 325 families and 379 single victims of domestic abuse presented as homeless during 2020-21
- People from Black and Asian communities represent a sizeable (19.7%) proportion of those presentations.
- As with other aspects of domestic abuse, certain areas of the city are over-represented in the figures.
- The city deals with a significant proportion of presentations from people from outside of the city, and beyond Greater Manchester.
- Almost 900 people were supported in 2020-21 in temporary accommodation under the Homelessness Duty.
- The age profile of those people was representative of that of the general population of the city, the majority being in the 25-44 age range.
- There are challenges in providing suitable safe accommodation for women with complex needs, those who are in employment and those with no recourse to public funds.
- There is also extremely limited safe accommodation in the region, or even nationally, for male victims

### **We will:**

- Develop a coordinated Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Pathway that allows for an integrated holistic assessment linked to a range of housing and support options that includes:
  - **Integrated specialist front door and support planning** which will combine domestic abuse and homelessness knowledge to best assess the suitability of various housing and support options
  - **Enhanced safe accommodation and support offer**, which will provide specialist support to adult and child victims of Domestic Abuse and include survivors with protected characteristics and / or complex needs. e.g., translators and interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice
  - **Move on and recovery**, to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse as they continue their recovery
- Work with housing providers and private landlords/agencies to support victims who want to stay in their home, through the provision of the Sanctuary scheme and access to civil and criminal remedies

- Ensure through the lifespan of the Strategy and annual updates that we respond in an agile and prompt manner to changing circumstances and emerging trends that may impact upon our responsibilities under the Duty and how we discharge them

'After being supported by you I am noticing that people are starting to warm to me and respect me because now I'm respecting myself''

## Domestic Abuse facts and statistics

- Each year over 2.3 million people in the UK suffer some form of domestic abuse, two thirds of whom are women
- Police in England and Wales recorded over 746,000 domestic abuse crimes in 2019, a 24% increase on 2018
- Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales
- 85% of victims sought help five times on average from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse
- On average, victims at high risk of serious harm or murder live with domestic abuse for 2-3 years before getting help
- The age group most represented by those who are victims of abuse, and by perpetrators of abuse, is 25-34
- Disabled women are twice as likely as non-disabled women to experience abuse and will do so for longer before seeking support
- Victims from Black, Asian and minoritised communities are at higher risk of repeat victimisation and face extra barriers to seeking help
- 1 in 7 children (14.2%) of children will have lived with domestic abuse at some point in their childhood
- Over 130,000 children live in households where high-risk domestic abuse is occurring
- More than a quarter of trans people will have experienced abuse from a partner in the past year
- 2.5% of people accessing services in 2018 identified themselves as LGBTQ+ survivors, a figure indicating significant under-reporting
- 40% of victims of domestic abuse report difficulties with their mental health
- 23% of high-risk victims attend A&E as a result of their injuries in the year before getting effective help, many multiple times
- The cost to the economy of tackling and responding to domestic abuse in 2017 was estimated at over £66 billion
- The economic cost to victims is equally high; being a victim leads to an 18% decrease in earnings and increases time spent on benefits by 42%

## Domestic Abuse in Manchester

- Over 13000 domestic abuse incidents were recorded in the city of Manchester during 2020-21
- In 2020-21 domestic abuse accounted for 17% of all victim-based crimes recorded by GMP in Manchester
- More deprived areas of the city see higher rates of domestic abuse - Harpurhey, Miles Platting & Newton Heath, Gorton & Abbey Hey the three worst affected wards
- High-risk cases discussed at the city's three MARACs increased by 34% in 2020, continuing a year-on-year trend
- 75% of domestic abuse offences recorded by GMP during 2020/21 involved a female victim
- 25% all domestic abuse offences recorded in the year to January 2021 featured a victim who had already been a victim in the previous 6 months
- Victims of domestic abuse in the city are most likely to be aged between 20 and 30, though people in their 40s and early 50s are also significantly impacted
- Older people are also significantly affected by domestic abuse - 22% of all incidents recorded in 2020 affected people aged over 50
- Men and women in Manchester who are disabled are twice as likely to be victims of domestic abuse as those who are not
- In 2019, nearly one in ten children in Manchester lived in a home where domestic abuse was occurring
- On average, over 70 Operation Encompass notifications are sent from GMP to schools across the city every week, equating to over 3500 per year
- The GM Domestic Abuse Helpline saw increased volumes of calls, and the length and complexity of them during the three lockdowns
- Over 5000 individuals had been identified as a perpetrator in a domestic abuse case from September 2019 – September 2020.
- Of these perpetrators, 30% had been linked to another victim and 12% had been linked to more than two victims
- Nearly eight out of ten perpetrators of domestic abuse are male, the most common age group being 26-33
- Between 25 and 40% of callers during the three lockdowns cited that the pandemic had made their situation worse

## Our aims and ambitions

### **Our aims for the next four years are to:**

- Prevent abuse and promote healthy relationships.
- Identify abuse and intervene as early as possible.
- Support victims/ survivors' recovery.

### **We will do this through:**

- Taking a person-centered and trauma-informed approach to supporting victims and families, which recognises the complex nature of domestic abuse and appreciates that everyone's needs, and circumstances will be different.
- Putting the needs of victims and their families at the centre of our approach to the design, commissioning and delivery of support and services.
- Empowering frontline staff and their managers, through comprehensive training and resources, to recognise and respond effectively to domestic abuse, engage with victims and their families and steer them towards the support and services they need.
- Ensuring that all victims can access support with a clear, appropriate package of care that is tailored to their needs, at all levels of identified risk and is delivered to a recognised quality standard
- Delivering interventions that are evidence-based and insight-driven, promoting a culture of continual learning through the collection and use of data.
- Continuing to work closely with our specialist domestic abuse partners, to support them and learn from their knowledge and expertise.
- Employing a range of measures, in conjunction with specialist partners, to robustly challenge and address the behaviour of perpetrators of abuse

"I felt as though I was carrying a heavy suitcase around which suddenly felt lighter and more manageable. The suitcase is feeling lighter already in a week".

## Preventing abuse and promoting healthy relationships

Preventing abuse requires more than stopping perpetrators from abusing again. We have heard, and research highlights too, that unhealthy and harmful attitudes are evident in communities, with abuse almost being seen as the norm, and women and girls often the victims.

We need to pursue further how we can work collectively, with residents, communities, businesses, services, to promote respect and healthy relationships, and to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours such as FGM, forced marriage and so-called Honour Based Violence and Abuse (HBVA).

Research and stakeholder feedback tell us that:

- Communities and public services do not always recognise domestic abuse for what it is, particularly coercive behaviours. Harmful attitudes and behaviours are evident in childhood.
- Young people are exposed to new channels for abuse and portrayals of unhealthy relationships via social media
- Positive interventions are in place to identify and target abuse early, such as support in midwifery and primary care.

We will:

- Work to raise awareness and change attitudes through communication and engagement with communities, so that people better understand about positive and healthy relationships, about abuse and its different forms (in particular coercive and controlling behaviours), and what help is available.
- Measure the effectiveness of these engagements and campaigns, such as understanding and changing attitudes, through use of surveys and opinion polls.
- Target community engagement with groups currently under-represented in services such as Black, Asian, and racially minoritized people and groups, LGBTQ+ communities, men, disabled people, and older people.
- Continue to work with communities and services to ensure that support and advice responds to their individual needs. We are aware of the additional barriers that these groups face, particularly women within them.
- Continue to widen community engagement and public awareness of particular aspects of domestic abuse, including forced marriage, FGM and honour-based violence and abuse, by encouraging a community-led approach and building on our existing work with communities and voluntary organisations.
- Work in partnership with schools, colleges, and universities both to (i) educate young people on positive and healthy relationships, and on gender-based violence; (ii) better equip young people to reject unacceptable attitudes, including the objectification of women.
- Ensure that, through our approach to training and development amongst staff across all our agencies, that we promote a culture of continued improvement in our response to domestic abuse, with the aim of reducing the level of risk and harm it causes across the city

## Identifying abuse and intervening as early as possible

Victims of abuse have repeatedly told us how important it is to know where to go for support. Particularly to know that they will be listened to and offered help at the very first opportunity. We know from conversations with partners, and from our own research, that:

- Domestic abuse continues to be under-reported in some sectors of our population, such as older people, disabled people and the veteran and armed forces communities
- Victims of abuse, and some frontline staff, often did not know who to speak to or what services were available to them.
- We recognise the traumatic impact of domestic abuse on children, who are now considered in the Domestic Abuse Act as victims in their own right. We understand that living with domestic abuse can be one of the most significant adverse child experiences (ACEs) a young person may endure, one that can cause long lasting harm
- We need to ensure that all professionals are trained in how to support victims from the first-time abuse is disclosed. We know 85% of victims nationally sought help on average five times from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse.
- Studies show that there are additional barriers for people to get support, including those with disabilities, LGBTQ+ victims, older people, people who do not speak English and those with no recourse to public funds.
- The support and help offered by frontline staff varied depending upon the training they had been offered, their awareness of the many differing forms domestic abuse and their understanding of services available.
- It is critical that we do not focus only on the victim; perpetrators need to be held to account and their behaviours addressed, to prevent further harm in their current and future relationships.
- Support needs to be centered around safety and what the victim needs or wants, not what is available.

We will:

- Work to clarify the pathways into support and services for victims of domestic abuse across the city, and to raise awareness of them amongst agencies, so that staff can have informed conversations with victims and ensure that services address a victim's needs.
- Seek to improve and expand the accessibility of our services and support, to ensure that they are available to everyone who needs them, when they need them, where they need them to be, and that they comprise all the required elements they need, for example in relation to people with disabilities or people in need of interpreter provision.
- Expand the Safe and Together model within Children's Services, promote a similar 'whole picture' approach across partner agencies, and also work to develop similar training that is appropriate for households without children.
- Build on the domestic abuse training already available to frontline staff, to ensure that they can recognise abuse, understand the diversity of victims (i.e., not making assumptions around who can be a victim or the support they may need) and ensure that the first response to calls for help is appropriate and effective.
- Continue to challenge and change perpetrator behaviour through provision of an appropriate range of perpetrator programmes
- Enable frontline staff to challenge harmful behaviour and direct perpetrators to those programmes, to help them take responsibility, understand the impact of their behaviour and reduce harm to the victim.

- Review how we commission and deliver our services to ensure that they are accessible and appropriate for anyone who needs them.
- Explore ways in which we can better support victims through the Criminal Justice System and Family Law Courts, and work with partners such as witness services to prepare victims and support them through these processes.
- Work with partners to improve the criminal justice response, the implementation of the new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO's), and increased protection for victims through both criminal and civil legal proceedings
- Work with the DA Commissioner to influence wider national discussion on the domestic abuse agenda, including promotion of longer-term funding arrangements and support for migrant women and those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

“There needs to be more recognition of the toll of controlling and coercive behaviour, just because there isn't a bruise doesn't mean everything is ok”.

## Supporting Victims / Survivors Recovery

We know from conversations with survivors of abuse, feedback from our partners and our own research, that protecting victims from domestic abuse is only the beginning of their journey to reclaiming their lives.

- The trauma does not end if the abuse stops. Survivors require ongoing and wide-ranging specialist support to help them with rebuilding their lives in safety and security.
- The impact of domestic abuse on victims' lives can last a lifetime. Recovery is not limited to physical healing and may need to include support with the mental health impacts of physical and emotional abuse, support with regaining financial stability, help with child care, help with finding employment and / or training or opportunities to learn a language
- Supporting victims' recovery means taking a person-centred approach, each victim's recovery will be an individual journey.
- Children exposed to domestic abuse are victims in their own right and have their own needs for tailored specialist support, for example with the impact on their mental health and wellbeing.
- It is too often the victim(s) that needs to move home to flee from the perpetrator.

We will:

- Work as a partnership to improve recognition that mental ill health can be a consequence of the trauma of domestic abuse and that showing mental distress and expressing emotion are rational reactions to being subjected to abuse and work to improve access to mental health services
- Promote a whole person approach to recovery across partner agencies and services, to strengthen the multi-agency response for those affected by domestic abuse.
- Seek to further develop support services to aid long term recovery, such as therapeutic services, counselling, housing, financial and legal advice, support with employment and training.
- Continue to listen to victim's experiences of these services to help us to further improve and develop our support and services.
- Enhance our understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children, to help us design, deliver and commission appropriate, trauma informed services.
- Explore future potential opportunities to invest in and expand specialist support for children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse

"Refuge staff provided me with emotional support and helped me access benefits and charities who provided money and food, help with household items. They also ensured I was referred to GP and my children's health and disability needs were met, as well as supporting me to receive immigration status. They gave me support with rehousing and even helped with children's homework and after school activities so I could get an education.

## Ensuring Equality

This strategy has been written with the understanding that, whilst we need to acknowledge that domestic abuse is overwhelmingly an issue impacting upon women, it can affect anyone, regardless of:

- age
- disability
- gender identity
- marriage or civil partnership status
- pregnancy or maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- caring responsibilities

There is no 'typical' domestic abuse victim and no 'typical' perpetrator.

We know that women with a disability are statistically more likely to experience domestic abuse. We also know that women from black and other minoritized communities, and those with no recourse to public funds face continuing challenges in accessing support and services, as do older people and men who are victims.

We have listened to the comments and view of those we have consulted and engaged with in producing this strategy and recognise that the diverse range of people who may become victims of domestic abuse need to see themselves in the support and services we offer, whether they are 'universal' services or of a 'by and for' nature.

This strategy is rooted in the priorities, values, and behaviours of the Our Manchester Strategy, in particular the priority of a Progressive and Equitable City, where all can thrive, with better joined-up support, care, and health services. Manchester is a city that is proud of its rich and broad diversity, and this strategy seeks to ensure that every resident, employee, visitor, and community of the city sees themselves in the services we provide. We will continue the valuable dialogue we have had with many people in developing this strategy, throughout its lifespan, so that it continues to be progressive, relevant, and meaningful to whom it aims to encompass.

"I was scared to discuss about FGM.... it's a taboo from the country I came from... Through counselling and talking through it helps me a lot".

## Monitoring our progress

Collection and collation of data on the prevalence and impact of Domestic Abuse agenda, and the performance of those agencies involved in tackling it, has historically been a challenge for agencies, services, and governing bodies across the country.

Our consultation work in preparation of this strategy highlighted that we have been making some steady progress towards a co-ordinated and streamlined model of monitoring and reporting. There is, however, more we can do to strengthen how we collect and report our data (locally, regionally, and nationally), and how we use that data to inform future policy, strategy, commissioning, and operational decisions.

As we move forward through the lifespan of this strategy our aim is to arrive at a comprehensive model that contains the following elements:

- A Domestic Abuse Balanced Scorecard (updated and reviewed quarterly, and published as a bulletin)
- Regular surveys – to ensure we maintain an understanding of people's perceptions, views, and experiences, and use them to inform future service design and delivery.
- Workforce data, for example progress on Domestic Abuse training and development programmes
- Funding and initiative data, including contract monitoring data, that ensures that funding assigned to projects and initiatives (in-house or commissioned) is delivering against stated aims and objectives
- Learning and insight from Domestic Homicide Reviews and other safeguarding reviews where domestic abuse was an aspect of the case

These elements will be further supported by:

- Bespoke data analyses (e.g. ad hoc / focused pieces of analysis on particular themes or emerging issues)
- Practical learning on the ground, for example from multi-agency case meetings at neighbourhood level, or the conduct of processes such as MARAC and DRIVE perpetrator panels
- Data collected and disseminated at GM level, for example the GM DA Dashboard and the GM residents survey

## Our Governance

Our governance arrangements in the city are well established and have been amended to ensure compliance with the requirements of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2020. From August 2021, the current Domestic Abuse Strategy Group will become a new Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and will assume responsibility for the discharge of the Safe Accommodation Duty contained within the Act.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board have a Terms of Reference developed in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act guidance, and will:

- Assess the need and demand for accommodation-based support for all victims and their children, including those who require cross-boundary support.
- Develop and publish strategies for the provision of support to cover the locality and diverse groups of victims.
- Give effect to strategies by making commissioning / de-commissioning decisions
- Meet the support needs of victims and their children
- Monitor and evaluate local delivery
- Report back to central Government

The Partnership Board will oversee and monitor delivery of the Strategy, any changes to policy or direction, and make key decisions relating to the funding and commissioning of services. Its' Terms of Reference will be regularly reviewed, as will its' membership, with the aim of ensuring it remains sufficiently balanced and representative of the communities we serve across the city.

The Board will ensure that regular twice-yearly reports on domestic abuse activity and performance are submitted to the Community Safety Partnership Board, as well as to the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership. Linkage to the operational and strategic governance of work on the Domestic Abuse agenda at Greater Manchester level is ensured by our active membership of the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators Group and the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, chaired by the Deputy Mayor.

At a neighbourhood level, the response to domestic abuse, and collaborative working on individual cases, is promoted through local multi agency partnerships. It is anticipated that the range and number of such networks will develop further during the lifespan of the Strategy.

## Getting Support

**If you are in immediate danger, call 999.** If you need to call 999 but cannot speak, call 999 and press 55. This will alert the police that you are in danger but cannot talk. Stay on the phone and follow the instructions given to you.

You can also contact **Greater Manchester Police** on the non-emergency number 101 or visit your local police station to speak with an officer in confidence.

**Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline** is a free, confidential line where staff can provide advice, help you with safety planning and help you access refuge spaces across the country. Advice is also available in Urdu and Punjabi. Tel: 0161 636 7525, Mon-Fri 10.00 - 16.00.

Information and advice about local support and services is also available online by visiting [www.endthefear.co.uk](http://www.endthefear.co.uk) which is Greater Manchester's web-based resource.

Advice and information are available 24 hours a day by phoning the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247

Manchester Women's Aid 0161 660 7999

Manchester Rape Crisis 0161 273 4591

LGBT Foundation 03453 30 30 30

Saheli 0161 945 4187

Male victims of abuse can get help and advice from the Men's Advice Line on 0808 801 0327

If you are concerned about your own behaviour, and worry that you already are, or could become abusive, get support at **[disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://disrespectnobody.co.uk)**

'MWA as an organisation have helped me tremendously, not only in benefits and housing, but also as a support network, I am very close to all of the women, we have dinner at each other's houses and have formed a community of support which I lost when I had to leave my husband, family and community'.