

Our Manchester

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021



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 dialogue on the issue and respond to domestic abuse in a way that 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.

However, culture change is organic, and while good progress is being made on many fronts, we recognise 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 citywide 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 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 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. However, we are acutely aware that domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, gender, race, religion or belief, socioeconomic circumstances or any disability or limiting condition they may have, and that much of this abuse is underreported.

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, while 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 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, 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-19 pandemic, and in parallel with the journey of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 through Parliament. In the following pages we set out 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 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 that will reflect the changing circumstances we are living and working in. We will ensure that our engagement and conversations continue with victims, survivors, staff and partners, so that any further development or change in 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 finally got the courage to leave.”

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – discharging our Safe Accommodation Duty

The Safe Accommodation Duty places several requirements upon local authorities, 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 the 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 overrepresented in the figures.
- The city deals with a significant proportion of presentations from people from outside of the city, and beyond Greater Manchester.

- In 2020/21, almost 900 people were supported 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 extremely limited safe accommodation in the region, or even nationally, for male victims.

We will:

- Develop a co-ordinated Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Pathway that allows for an integrated holistic assessment linked to a range of housing and support options that include:
- 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 for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and include survivors with protected characteristics and/or complex needs. eg. 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

2.3
million

Each year over **2.3million** people in the UK suffer some form of domestic abuse, **two thirds** of whom are women

24%

Police in England and Wales recorded over **746,000** domestic abuse crimes in 2019, a **24%** increase on 2018



85%

85% of victims sought help an average of **five times** from professionals in the year before they received effective help to stop the abuse

7

Every month, **seven** women are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales

2-3yrs

On average, victims at high risk of serious harm or murder live with domestic abuse for **two to three years** before seeking help

25-34

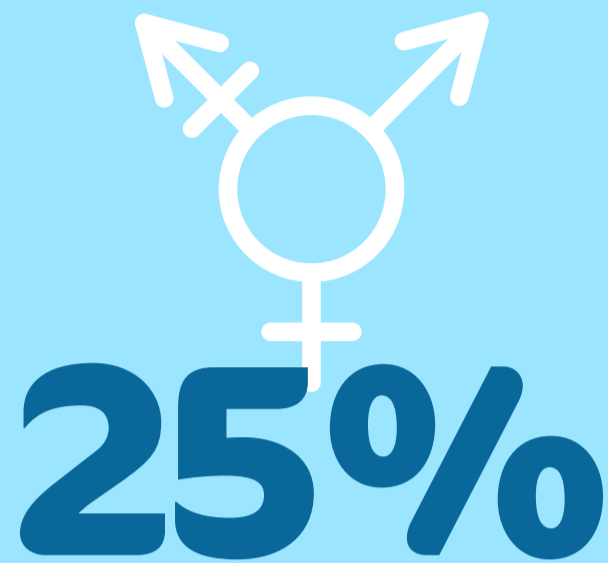
The age group most represented by those who are victims of abuse, and by perpetrators of abuse, is **25-34**

BAME

Victims from Black, Asian and minoritised communities are at **higher risk** of repeat victimisation and face extra barriers to seeking help

2x

Disabled women are **twice as likely** as non-disabled women to experience abuse and will do so for longer before seeking support



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 underreporting**



40% of victims of domestic abuse report difficulties with their **mental health**



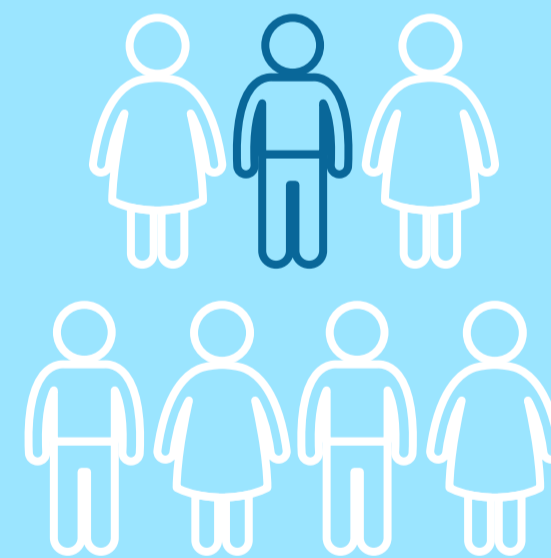
23% of high-risk victims attend **A&E** as a result of their injuries in the year before seeking effective help – some multiple times



In 2017, the cost to the economy of **tackling and responding** to domestic abuse was estimated at over £66billion



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%



One in seven children (14.2%) 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

Domestic abuse in Manchester

**Over
13,000**

domestic-abuse incidents were recorded in the city of Manchester during 2020/21

75%

of domestic-abuse offences recorded by GMP during 2020/21 involved a female victim

Men and women in Manchester who are disabled are

twice as likely

to be victims of domestic abuse as those who are not

Over 5,000

individuals had been identified as a perpetrator in a domestic-abuse case from September 2019 to September 2020

In 2020/21, domestic abuse accounted for

17%

of all victim-based crimes recorded by GMP in Manchester

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

In 2019, almost a

tenth

of children in Manchester lived in a home where domestic abuse was occurring

Of these perpetrators,

30%

had been linked to another victim and 12% had been linked to more than two victims

More deprived areas of the city see

higher rates

of domestic abuse: Harpurhey, Miles Platting & Newton Heath, Gorton & Abbey Hey are the three worst affected wards

25%

of 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

On average, over

seventy

Operation Encompass notifications are sent from GMP to schools across the city every week, equating to over 3,500 per year

Nearly

eight out of ten

perpetrators of domestic abuse are male, the most common age group being 26–33

In 2020, there was a

34%

increase in the number of high-risk cases discussed at the city's three MARAC* meetings. This upward trend has continued over recent years

Older people are also significantly affected by domestic abuse –

22%

of all incidents recorded in 2020 affected people aged over 50

During the three lockdowns, the GM Domestic Abuse Helpline received an

increased

number of calls that were longer and more complex than normal

During the three lockdowns, between

25 and 40%

of callers said 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-centred and trauma-informed approach to supporting victims and families, recognising the complex nature of domestic abuse and 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 front-line 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 that it 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, supporting them and learning 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 shows, that unhealthy and harmful attitudes are evident in communities, with abuse almost being seen as the norm, and women and girls often being the victims.

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

Research and stakeholder feedback tells 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 underrepresented in services, such as Black, Asian, and racially minoritised 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 to educate young people on positive and healthy relationships and on gender-based violence, and to better equip young people to reject unacceptable attitudes, including the objectification of women
- Ensure that, through our approach to training and development among staff across all our agencies, 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. They particularly want to know they will be listened to and offered help at the first opportunity. We know from conversations with partners and from our own research that:

- Domestic abuse continues to be underreported in some sectors of our population, such as older people, disabled people and the veteran and armed forces communities.
- Victims of abuse, and some front-line staff, often did not know who to speak to or what services were available to them. Domestic abuse has a traumatic impact 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, and 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 received 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 front-line staff varied depending upon the training they had been offered, their awareness of the many differing forms of 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 centred 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 among 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 work to develop similar training that is appropriate for households without children
- Build on the domestic-abuse training already available to front-line staff, to ensure that they can recognise abuse, understand the diversity of victims (ie. 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 front-line 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 (DAPOs), 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 long-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 okay.”

Supporting victims' and 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 reclaim 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, eg. for 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:

- As a partnership, work to improve access to mental health services. Mental ill health can be a consequence of trauma. Mental and emotional distress are rational reactions to the trauma caused by domestic abuse.
- 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, and support with employment and training.
- Continue to listen to victim's experiences of these services to help us 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 that provided money and food, and help with household items. They also ensured I was referred to a GP, and that 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 while we need to acknowledge domestic abuse is overwhelmingly an issue affecting 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 minoritised 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 views 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 all residents, employees, visitors, and communities of the city see themselves in the services we provide. Throughout its lifespan, we will continue the valuable dialogue we have had with many people in developing this strategy, so that it continues to be progressive, relevant, and meaningful to those it aims to encompass.

“I was scared to discuss FGM... it's a taboo from the country I came from. Through counselling and talking, it helps me a lot.”

Monitoring our progress

The collection and collation of data on the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse agenda, and the performance of those agencies involved in tackling it, have historically been challenges 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. However, there is 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 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 (eg. ad hoc/focused pieces of analysis on particular themes or emerging issues)
- Practical learning, 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 and de-commissioning decisions
- Meet the support needs of victims and their children
- Monitor and evaluate local delivery
- Report back to the 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 and membership will be regularly reviewed, 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 and 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, are 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 assist you to access refuge spaces across the country. Advice is also available in Urdu and Punjabi. Tel: 0800 254 0909, Monday to Friday 10am–4pm.

Information and advice about local support and services is also available online by visiting www.endthefear.co.uk, which is Greater Manchester's web-based resource.

Advice and information is 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, you can receive support at 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 the women; we have dinner at each other's houses and have formed a community of support that I lost when I had to leave my husband, family and community.”