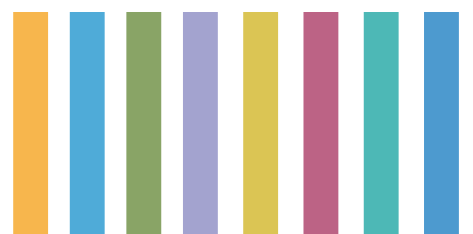


# Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2014-2017

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Halton Domestic Abuse Forum



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## Foreword

The impact of domestic violence on the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults is well researched and evident in the work that all partners undertake with people who have been affected.

It is crucial that partners and the community work together to reduce domestic violence and its impact by ensuring we all have a common aim and vision that we all share. Victims and perpetrators need to know how to get support, and know that all partners are alert to and act upon signs of domestic violence.

Halton Domestic Advice Forum's role is to ensure that we are able to demonstrate improved outcomes by working together and hearing from victims about what they need when they find themselves in a risk situation.

HDAF has achieved noticeable improvements and will continue to drive this strategy forward. The pilot voluntary perpetrators programme for those who have not been convicted, the programme targeting support and intervention to children, young people and their parents who have been significantly affected by experiencing domestic violence, and the specific role of the Young Persons Advocate focusing on young people's experiences of domestic violence in their relationships are 3 examples of the innovative work developed via HDAF which we are taking forward as part of this strategy.

I would like to thank all the partners and victims who have contributed to the revision of this strategy to make it a living, working document which will help us to continue to make a difference. In particular, I would like to thank Sarah Ashcroft, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-Ordinator for her hard work and energy in supporting the work of HDAF and partners.

Tracey Coffey

Chair of HDAF

Operational Director Children and Families, Halton Borough Council

# Background

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## Background

The purpose of this document is to set out what Halton intends to do over the next three years 2014-2017 in order to ensure that tackle the issue of domestic abuse and sexual violence within our communities. Halton Domestic Abuse Forum as a partnership will aim to create equality for all our residents through reducing the fear and harm experienced from this form of violence and abuse.

This Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (2014-17) following the successful implementation of the previous version (2011-14).

The impact of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is costly not only to the victim, in terms of personal and emotional cost but also to the local economy with increased costs for health services, the criminal justice system, housing, safeguarding and social care costs and the loss of economic productivity.

The responsibility for any act of domestic abuse or sexual violence lies with its perpetrator. There is no excuse for abuse or violence, there is no justification, it can never be explained away and there is no context in which it is valid, understandable or acceptable.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are issues that affect children and young people. Ensuring that young people are able to identify abuse and have the knowledge and information available to them to enable them to make and identify healthy relationships in central to raising expectations both in males and females.

The strategy will seek to improve the risk identification, assessment and management processes and to target educational and support services effectively. No single agency can adequately deal with DASV. The issue needs to be addressed by joint working and multi-agency strategies.

This is the beginning of a new phase in Halton and within this document we provide the local context, outline the current needs of our communities and explain our vision for the future. We also have an action plan in place which specifies what will be done, by whom and when in order to achieve our vision.

# Vision

**'Everyone is able to live in an environment free from abuse, and where abuse does occur, support is given to individuals and their families and action is taken against perpetrators to prevent any re-occurrence'.**



## Vision

The vision for tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence articulated in the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-16 is:

***'Everyone is able to live in an environment free from abuse, and where abuse does occur, support is given to individuals and their families and action is taken against perpetrators to prevent any re-occurrence'.***

Halton Domestic Abuse Forum acts as a multi-agency partnership and is committed to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse and sexual violence ensuring that within Halton:

- Partnership agencies will work in collaboration demonstrating a whole system approach to supporting victims, children, perpetrators and families affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Halton exhibits a zero tolerance approach, domestic abuse and sexual violence is never acceptable;
- People understand what domestic abuse and sexual violence is and what they can do about it;
- Victims are protected and supported
- Early and effective interventions are provided for children and young people, offering support and advice to parents and young people in order to address need and support behavioural change;
- Perpetrators are brought to justice and tackle the underlying motivators to their behaviour

# Definition of Domestic Abuse

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**'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.'**





## Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is a systematic abuse of power and control that takes place within particular relationships.

Halton has adopted the Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

***'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. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:***

- ***psychological***
- ***physical***
- ***sexual***
- ***financial***
- ***emotional***

***Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.***

***Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'***

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

<sup>1</sup> **Family members are:** mother, son, daughter, sister and grandparents; directly-related, in laws or step-family

# Definition of Sexual Violence

**'Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity'**

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## Definition of Sexual Violence

Halton adopts the Rape Crisis England and Wales definition of sexual violence:

***‘Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse. Sexual violence can be perpetrated by a complete stranger, or by someone known and even trusted, such as a friend, colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner. Sexual violence can happen to anyone.’***

# Context

**'It is widely accepted that the issue of both domestic abuse and sexual violence are under-reported.'**

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## Context

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are serious crimes. They are a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior, held together by the threat and use of violence, which is widespread across all communities. It is widely accepted that the issue of both domestic abuse and sexual violence are under-reported.

### National key statistics

- One in four women and one in seven men report being abused by their partner<sup>2</sup>
- On average two women are killed every week in the UK by their partner or ex-partner (in the year 2009/10 94 women and 21 men were killed).<sup>3</sup>
- Victims are likely to experience 35 incidents of abuse before reporting it<sup>4</sup>
- Domestic abuse accounts for 14% of all violent crime<sup>5</sup>
- Both women and men aged between 16 and 24 are at highest risk for domestic abuse compared to older groups<sup>6</sup>
- Around one in twenty children is witness to frequent physical violence between parents<sup>7</sup>
- Sexual abuse in childhood (in children under age of 16) affects 16 per cent of children

<sup>2</sup> Chaplin R, Flatley J and Smith K, Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Crime in England and Wales 2010/11, London: Home Office, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Research Development & Statistics Directorate Home Office

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics (2013) Focus on: violent crime and sexual offences, 2011/12 (PDF). [Newport]: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

<sup>6</sup> Farmer E and Callan S, Beyond Violence: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Abuse: The Centre for Social Justice, July 2012

<sup>7</sup> Cawson P et al. Child Maltreatment in the United Kingdom: A study of the prevalence of abuse and neglect. NSPCC 2000

- Around 90 per cent of survivors of the most serious sexual crimes knew the perpetrator
- Each adult rape is estimated to cost over £96,000

Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) estimates that there are 100,000 victims at high risk of serious harm or murder. It costs the tax payer an estimated £3.9bn per year, with high risk domestic abuse making up £2.9bn of this. Domestic Abuse has adverse impacts on the health and wellbeing of victims, and is closely associated with child abuse and neglect, as well as a range of other social issues including homelessness and substance abuse.<sup>8</sup>

The cost of the 'average' domestic violence case has been estimated at £14,000 however, this does not take into account longer-term costs of unemployment, health and social services.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> CAADA Insights: A plea of greater safety November 2012

<sup>9</sup> A Process Evaluation [www.cardiff.ac.uk/people](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/people) Funded by the Home Office Nov 2009

## a) National Policy

The Government set out its vision to tackle domestic and sexual violence in 'A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls' 2010. The government committed to undertaking an ambitious vision, recognising that tackling violence against women and girls requires a sustained, robust and dynamic multi-agency approach. The Government refreshed its commitment again in March 2013 publishing a detailed action plan. The updated plan looks at challenging the attitudes that foster violence against women and girls.

The guiding principle of Call to End Violence against Women and Girls focuses on four key objectives:

1. prevent violence from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it
2. provide adequate support where violence does occur
3. work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families
4. take action to reduce the risk to women and girls who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

There have been key developments that have shaped this document including:

- Widening the Government Definition of domestic abuse to include young people aged 16 and 17.
- The introduction of new legislation to make forced marriage a criminal offence in England and Wales.
- Providing protection for victims of stalking by introducing two new specific criminal offences, along with additional related search powers and training for Police and Prosecutors.
- The requirement and duty on Community Safety Partnerships to conduct a Domestic Homicide Review – where a person aged over 16 had died as a result of violence, abuse or neglect caused by either a relative, partner or ex-partner or a member of the same household as the deceased.

The above developments are supported by the following national policies/legislation that have influenced development of this refreshed Halton Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy:

- Association of Police Chief Guidelines for work within Honour-Based Violence 2008
- Working Together 2013
- Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2010 & 2011

- The Troubled Family Programme 2012
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill 2012
- The Victims Strategy, Getting it right for victims and witnesses 2012
- Ending Gang And Youth Violence Cross Government Report 2011
- Munro Review of Child Protection 2010-2012
- Crime and Disorder Act 2004
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Statutory Guidance for Domestic Homicide Review 2011
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (updated 2012)

### b) Analysis of Local Need

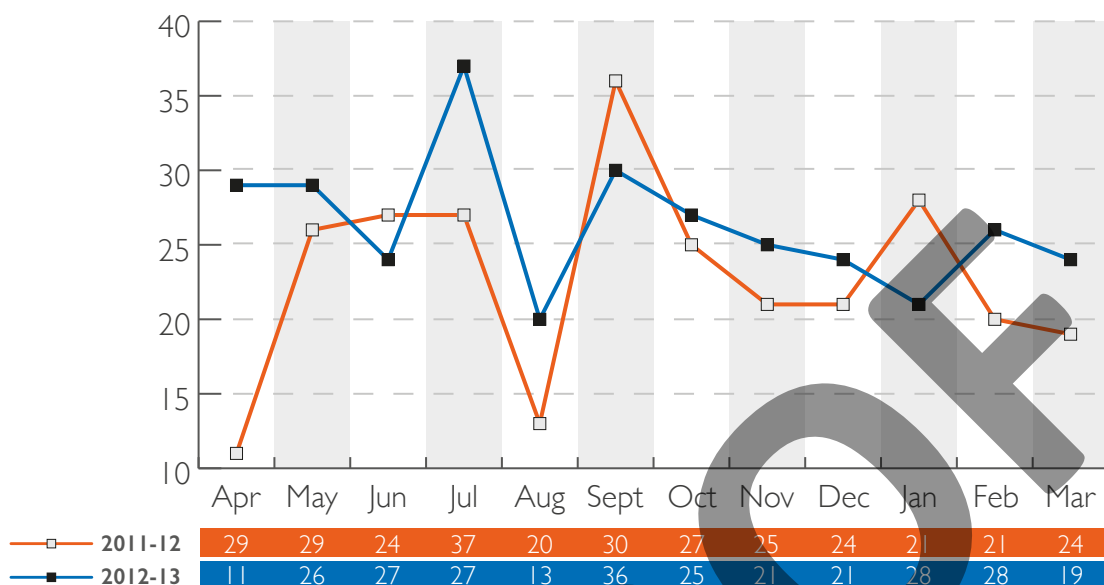
Local data underlines a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control, with women being considerably more likely to experience repeated and much more severe forms of abuse than men

**Figure 1: Domestic Abuse Incidents** (2012/13 there were 930 incidents however no figures are available for arrests. The graph below represents the data from 2010/11 and 2011/12).





**Figure 2: Number of Domestic Abuse Incidents Involving Victims Who Have Previously Been a Victim During the Last 12 Months**



Trends in domestic abuse in Runcorn and Widnes April 2012 – Mar 814 female victims/survivors of domestic abuse incidents compared with 132 male victims / survivors.

- 779 perpetrators of domestic abuse incidents were male, compared with 105 females.
- 273 high-risk cases were discussed within the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- 100 cases were discussed within MARAC as repeat cases, 99 of them involving females as repeat victims
- 363 Children and Young People were identified as affected by domestic abuse within the MARAC process, with 195 of these aged 5 and below

It is widely accepted that there are many incidents which go unreported; this poses difficulties in collating accurate data on domestic abuse. The problem relate to the hidden and private nature of domestic abuse, many incidents go unreported due to fear of reprisal, personal embarrassment, lack of understanding and a lack of knowledge about where to go to and who to talk to and ask for support.

Over the past few years Halton has been actively encouraging victims to come forward and report domestic abuse incidents, raising awareness and understanding across the local communities to break down barriers and encourage local communities to report incidents of domestic abuse. This on-going work seeks that seeks to create a change in culture and subsequently increase domestic abuse reporting makes trends relating to domestic abuse sometimes difficult to interpret, it is not always apparent whether increases in reporting are due to increased domestic abuse within the Borough or an increase in victims willing to report abuse linked to a confidence in the local service provision.

# Local Delivery Structure

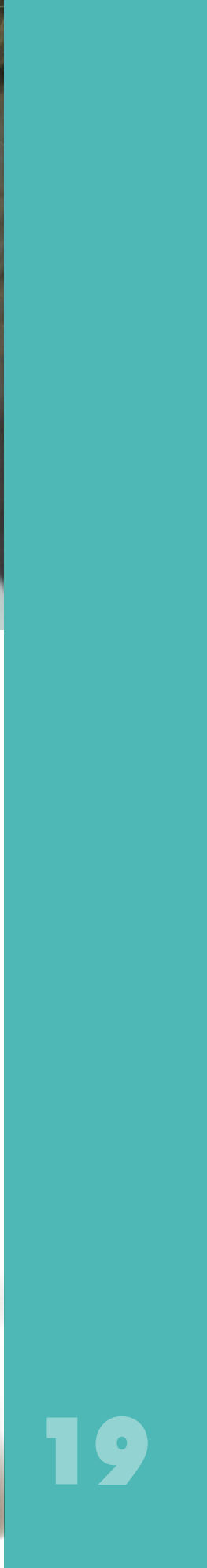
**'Domestic Abuse and Sexual  
Violence are issues that affect  
and impact on children and young  
people'**

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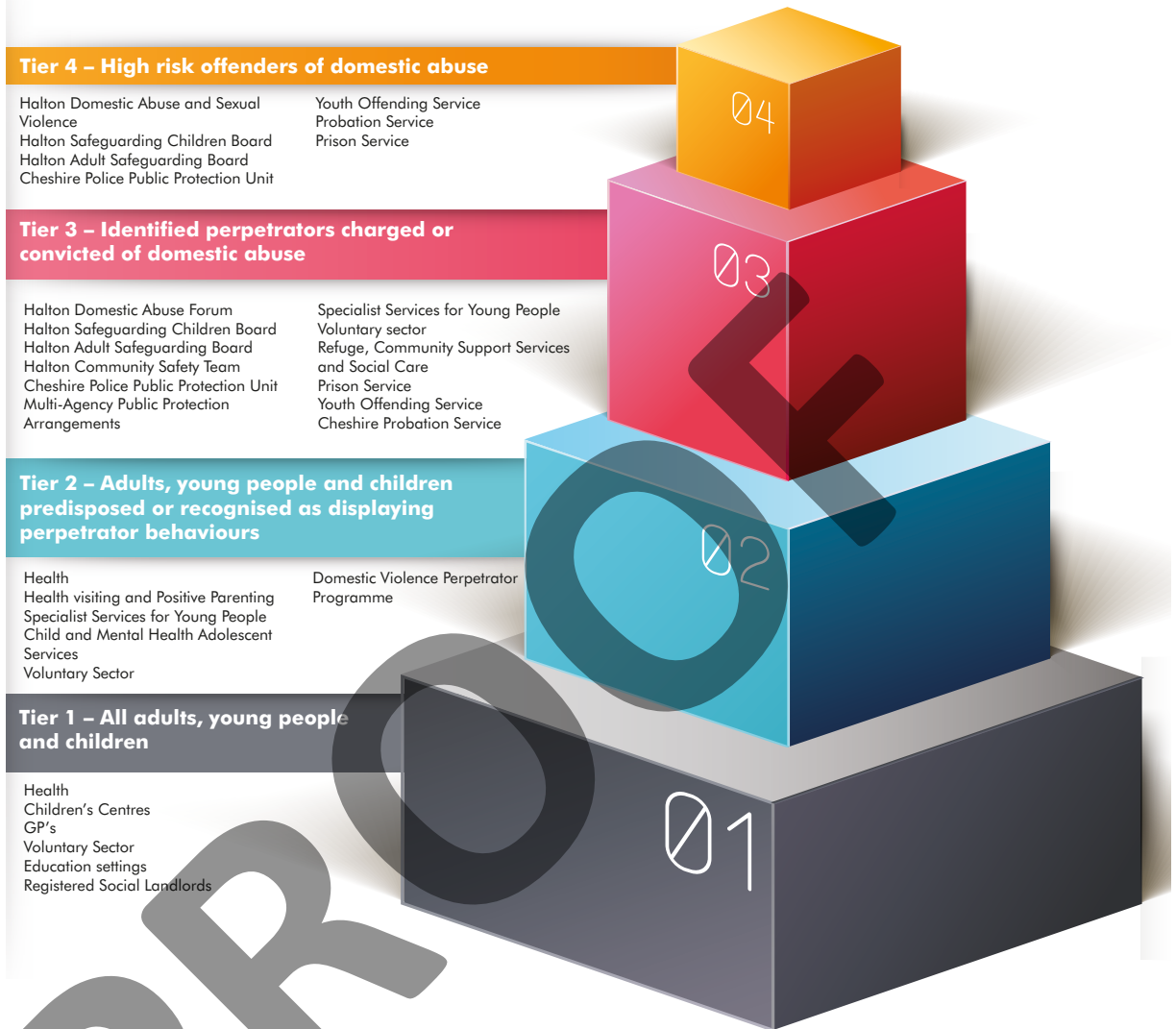


# Local Delivery Structure

## Tiers of Interventions for Victims, Young People and Children



## Tiers of Interventions for Perpetrators



### **Victims / Survivors**

The impacting consequences of domestic abuse and sexual violence on the victim/survivor, in most cases, are extremely damaging to the individuals mental and emotional health, well-being and in some cases physical health. The implications of abuse can have long term and permanent effects. Society's better understanding and support of victims/survivors can significantly help reduce the negative impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence on the individual.

Many victims do not readily identify themselves as such, it is essential that all agencies have knowledge and expertise and ability to help them recognise abusive behaviour in their lives to enable victims to understand the impact on not only their safety but the safety of their children too. Support services in Halton focus on assisting victims to achieve long term safety and move on from abuse.

## **Young People**

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are issues that affect and impact on children and young people. Ensuring that children and young people are able to identify abuse, have the knowledge and information available to them to access age appropriate support and are able to identify and foster healthy relationships is central to raising expectations both in males and females.

Halton is developing support services for children, young people and families affected by domestic abuse as well as ensuring there are key links to Child Sexual Exploitation. We want to offer a range of support and positive interventions that will listen to the voice of the child and manage risk such as safety planning ; promote preventative work that will improve outcomes to the lives of children, young people and families.

## **Perpetrators**

The widespread nature of domestic abuse and violence calls for preventative approaches that aim to change attitudes, values and behavior at the level of the individual, the community and professional.

When one relationship ends most perpetrators have other relationships creating new adult and child victims. One of the most common requests from survivors is for someone to work with their partner, to help them change and keep them safe from further abuse.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse must be challenged and brought to justice. Domestic Violence Prevention Programmes are well placed to assist agencies perpetrators that recognise that their actions have an impact on their home life and are willing to make positive changes.

## **Domestic Abuse is a cross-cutting issue**

Domestic abuse, like substance misuse, is a cross-cutting issue. It affects health, housing, parenting, benefits, social functioning, criminal activity, employment, finances and aspirations and like substance misuse it is often hidden until a crisis point is reached by which stage problems are complex, embedded and long lasting.

The overlap of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill health is well documented as are the effects on children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, Munro Review of Child Protection, Alberti Task Force). These are the three key adult factors which disadvantage individuals, families and communities and place significant demands on services.

# Key Outcomes of the Strategy

**“I would definitely recommend this service. For me it has been life changing and has given me my confidence back” Pauline 52**

**“My support worker has been great, going to court with me, she has a knowledge of legal issues and provided practical support. I couldn’t have done it without her.” Maxine 38**

**“I receive fantastic support. I’m having counselling and I feel safe” Laura 22**

**“The service I received as friendly, approachable and knowledgeable. My support worker discussed all the options available in a way that was clear for me understand and never felt judged”. Emma 29**



## Key Outcomes of the Strategy

- Halton's residents understand what is meant by domestic abuse and they know what they can do about it and where to get help;
- Halton's victims of domestic abuse are protected and supported to live in safety,
- Increased local community awareness of respectful personal relationships, challenge social tolerances of domestic abuse to tackle the issue at the root cause
- Agencies will hear the voices of service users and listen to the voice of the child so that they can influence the responses of the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum
- There will be fewer children and young people affected by domestic abuse;
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse do not repeat their abusive behaviour.
- Ensure that we have the right services in place to support adults, young people and children.
- Support the development of an effective coordinated, multi-agency response to domestic abuse that is flexible and responds to changes in local need in a fast paced and challenging delivery environment.

# Governance and Accountability

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## Governance and Accountability

Halton Strategic Partnership is ultimately responsible for, and committed to ensuring the vision for domestic abuse in Halton becomes a reality.

Halton Domestic Abuse Forum Strategic Group was established to provide overall direction, control management and guidance for the response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence within Halton. It act as a multi-agency partnership board of lead officers and key representatives, which takes strategic decisions aimed at tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence in their widest forms and provide support to all victims within our area. The Forum is responsible for determining and implementing policy, coordinating activity between agencies, and facilitating training. It evaluates the responses we have locally for victims, children living in households where domestic violence is a feature and to consider provision for perpetrators. The Forum promotes inter-agency cooperation, to encourage and help develop effective working relationships between different services and agencies, based on mutual understanding and trust. In order to develop and sustain a high level of commitment to the protection of victims of domestic abuse and affected children and young people.

Halton Domestic Abuse Forum support and encourage service user groups and ensure that they have a voice in the work undertaken within the Borough.

Halton Domestic Abuse Forum recognise that Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence do not stand alone as isolated issues and have endeavoured to strengthen the links with other areas, such as Hate Crime, Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection.

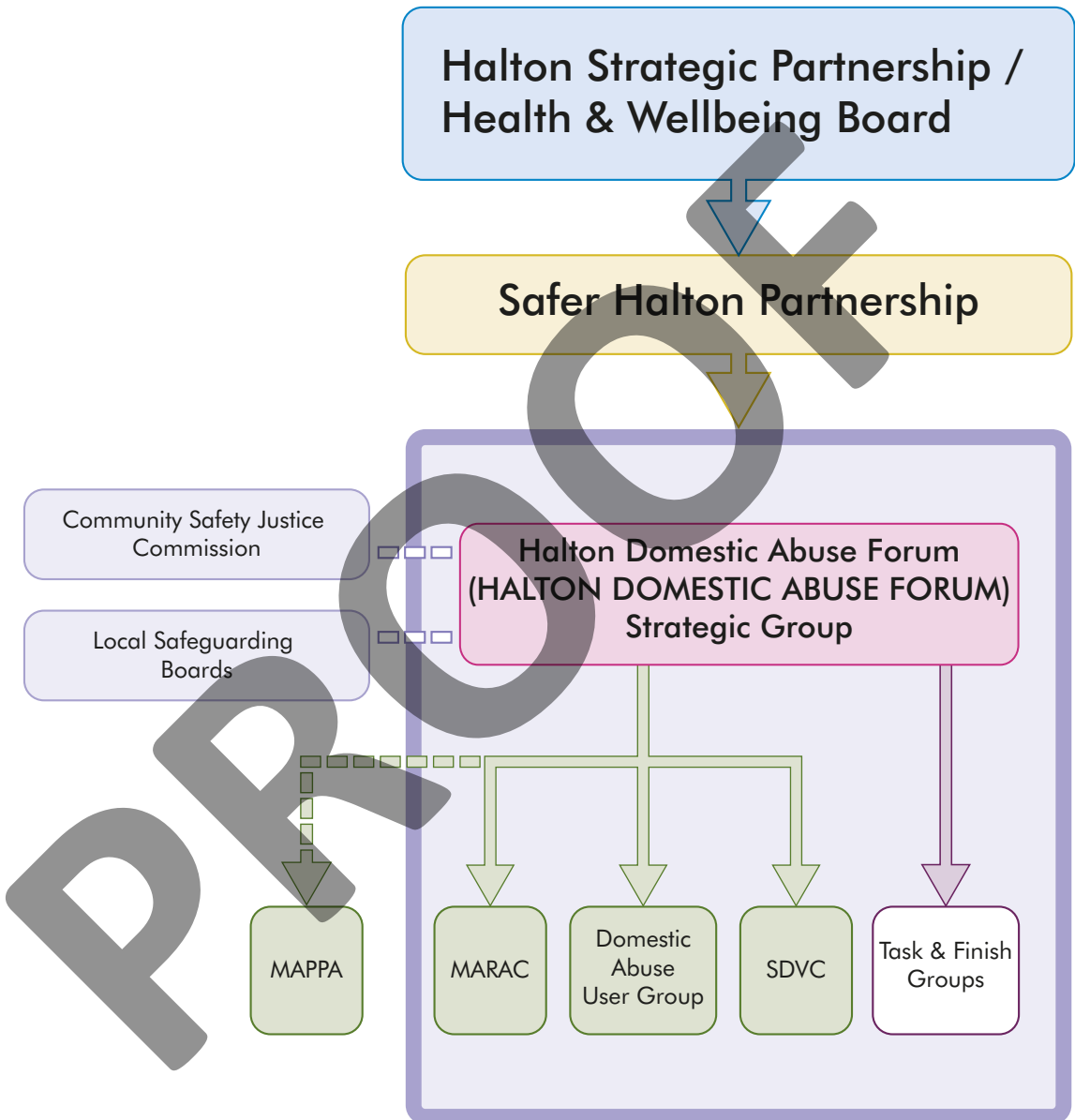
While this work needs to take place within the context of the broader Crime and Disorder reduction strategy, the nature and effects of domestic abuse and sexual violence are such that there is a need to develop specific ways of taking a proactive stance from a strategic as well as operational perspective.

Furthermore, Halton Domestic Abuse Forum is accountable and open to challenge from to Halton Safeguarding Children's Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy will be subject to on-going scrutiny to reflect any changing needs, priorities and take into account financial constraints over the period.

***This strategy is valid until March 2017.***

# Halton Strategic Partnership / Health & Wellbeing Board



## Halton Domestic Abuse Contacts:

For further information relating to the content of this strategy, please contact:

### Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator

Halton Borough Council

Tel: 0303 333 4300

[www3.halton.gov.uk](http://www3.halton.gov.uk)

If you would like additional help and support with Domestic Abuse, contact any of the following national helplines:

National 24hr Helpline	08082000247 <a href="http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk</a>
M.A.L.E (Men's advice line)	08088010327 <a href="http://www.mensadvice.org.uk">www.mensadvice.org.uk</a>
Broken Rainbow (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender support)	03009995428 <a href="http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk">www.broken-rainbow.org.uk</a>
Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300 <a href="mailto:advice@stalkinghelpline.org">advice@stalkinghelpline.org</a>

For information on Specialist Services and Organisations within your local area contact the Police, or:

Halton Domestic Abuse Service	0300 11 11 247 <a href="http://www.halton3.gov.uk">www.halton3.gov.uk</a>
Cheshire West and Chester. Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit	01606 351375 <a href="http://www.cheshirewestandchester.org.uk">www.cheshirewestandchester.org.uk</a>
Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit	01606 363532 <a href="http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk">www.cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Warrington Independent Domestic Abuse Support Service	01925 243359 <a href="http://www.warrington.gov.uk">www.warrington.gov.uk</a>

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre – Cheshire & Merseyside	01928 477980 <a href="http://www.rapecentre.org.uk">www.rapecentre.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:support@rapecentre.org.uk">support@rapecentre.org.uk</a>
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Cheshire Police contact number 101

**In an EMERGENCY always ring 999**

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