

DRAFT - Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy – Action Plan  
September 2023

Strategic Priority 1	Lead Agency	Key Actions to Explore and Deliver
<p><b>Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership – Act before someone is harmed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse is never acceptable; Halton have adopted a zero-tolerance culture.</li> <li>• We actively promote Clare’s Law, The Right to Know and The Right to Ask.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safelives Plan for Change</b></p> <p>Make the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner role fit for purpose, with independence and a comprehensive approach to domestic abuse built in.</p>		<p>Work with schools, colleges, and places of employment to highlight issues relating to domestic abuse, promote healthy relationships.</p> <p>Develop a network of links throughout the faith sector to communicate key messages with.</p> <p>Continue to support the Safer Streets Campaign in Halton.</p> <p>Support the White Ribbon annual event.</p> <p>Explore / consider white ribbon accreditation.</p> <p>Promote Clare’s Law via ongoing social media channels. Professionals’ communications as well as highlighting at training events. Ensure that the HBC website has appropriate links and information.</p> <p>Develop a pool of domestic abuse campaigns across partnership teams to have ongoing dialogue and communicate domestic abuse resources, training opportunities and be the point of contact for staff who need first response support for domestic abuse related matters.</p>

Strategic Priority 2	Lead Agency	Key Actions to Explore and Deliver
<p><b>Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership – Identify and stop harmful behaviours.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone needs to understand their responsibilities and what they can do to contribute to tackling domestic abuse in Halton.</li> <li>• Promote support services and upskill people so that when families, friends, neighbours, or co-workers are concerned about someone they know, they have access to specialist help, feel supported and are equipped to prevent harm.</li> <li>• Through improved systems and sharing information about adults and children at risk of harm we can identify and understand the needs of individuals and families so we can provide timely interventions.</li> <li>• We share and spend resources in a way that best matches our collective whole picture approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safelives Plan for Change</b></p> <p>Identify and stop harmful behaviours, with a comprehensive perpetrator strategy.</p> <p>Change the public conversation with a campaign highlighting the voice of survivors and supporting and challenging perpetrators to question their own behaviour.</p>		<p>Develop a multi-faceted training package that meets the needs of volunteers, professionals, and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Consider options to have a local 24-7 telephone number for victims to call.</p> <p>Develop a campaign schedule throughout the year to promote domestic abuse, with identified key themes.</p> <p>Ensure the points of access for key services have up to date material available to people with key information and contact information.</p> <p>Continually look for opportunities to improve the corporate response to domestic abuse, support staff in co-locating and linking up service responses and opportunities for joint work.</p> <p>Specialist domestic abuse trained staff working with other professionals improve understanding of roles, upskilling, mentoring, and shadowing opportunities to improve service responses for those affected by domestic abuse.</p> <p>Ensure resources are allocated in line with priorities identified by the Halton Domestic Abuse Board.</p>

<p>Explore how Police, Probation and partners can work better serial Domestic Abuse offenders.</p> <p>See domestic abuse as part of a whole picture linked with other adverse experiences.</p>		<p>HBC to consider employing a lead officer for the development of a local domestic abuse perpetrator response.</p> <p>Develop a workforce response to upskill frontline staff to be equipped to challenge harmful behaviours.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to link in with females' offenders and provide a point of access.</p> <p>Develop a dashboard / performance framework that the domestic abuse partnership strategic group can monitor outputs and outcomes relating to domestic abuse in Halton.</p>
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<b>Strategic Priority 3</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Key Actions to Explore and Deliver</b>
<p><b>Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership - Increase safety for those at risk.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all frontline staff have the tools and skill sets to recognise domestic abuse, provide advice and have the understanding to do effective safety and support work within their remit, with the individuals and families they support.</li> </ul>		<p>Commission a public health approach review of domestic abuse interventions, support and provision in Halton.</p> <p>Continue to support the Engage intervention in custody.</p> <p>Update the Sanctuary Policy.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We must do everything within our gift to ensure victims and their dependents are protected from harm within the community or within a range of supported accommodation options.</li> <li>• We develop specialist skill sets to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community, that services and support are accessible and equitable.</li> <li>• Working in partnership with Criminal Justice we must work in collaboration to ensure that those who harm are brought to justice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safelives Plan for Change</b></p> <p>Train people in a position to help giving them clear policies on their role in responding to domestic abuse.</p> <p>Fund a comprehensive range of housing options for victims and perpetrators.</p> <p>The Health Sector must step up its response as the first port of call for many living with domestic abuse.</p> <p>Streamline the criminal, civil and family courts, holding perpetrators to account and supporting survivors to access justice and be safe.</p>		<p>Update the MARAC Operating Protocol.</p> <p>Consider setting up a MARAC Steering Group.</p> <p>Commission specialist domestic abuse accommodation and work with partner agencies to explore other safe accommodation offers.</p> <p>Ensure learning is shared relating to suicide and domestic abuse.</p> <p>Support victims in response to Domestic Violence Prevention Orders.</p> <p>Ensure learning is developed and communicated relating to non-fatal strangulation.</p> <p>Domestic Homicide Reviews – share learning. Ensure panel member training, chair training and process manager training are in place.</p> <p>Explore opportunities with health colleagues to bring IRIS to Halton.</p> <p>Ensure we have sufficient IDVA support in place to respond to local need.</p> <p>Explore the safe and Together model as corporate approach for supporting families affected by domestic abuse.</p>
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Strategic Priority 4	Lead Agency	Key Actions to Explore and Deliver
<p><b>Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership – Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victims are offered support and services that best fit their needs and help them to recover. Victims and families are empowered to be resilient and independent.</li> <li>• Children and young people are recognised in their own right, providing early and effective interventions, offering support and advice to parents and young people in order to address need and support behavioural change;</li> </ul>		<p>Action the Authentic Service User Voices workstream as identified by Safelives.</p> <p>Develop a network of peer support and survivors.</p> <p>Deliver a rolling program of group gateway and ensure appropriate staff are trained to deliver one-to-one interventions.</p> <p>Continue to offer You, Me and Mum.</p> <p>Continue to support Reset.</p> <p>Continue to support the delivery of Innovating Minds.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who harm are offered the support they need to change and tackle the underlying motivators to their behaviour.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safelives Plan for Change</b></p> <p>Commission a comprehensive spectrum of specialist support for Adults, working to high standards in every local area and online.</p> <p>Meet the needs of children. Ensure the response is linked to the response to all family members.</p> <p>Identify and stop harmful behaviours, with a comprehensive perpetrator strategy.</p>		<p>Ensure children affected by domestic abuse are supported by specialist domestic abuse interventions, counselling, and support. That provision is afforded to the non-abusive parent. To offer child to parent violence intervention.</p> <p>Deliver Building Better Relationships training with offenders.</p> <p>Develop a local voluntary perpetrator program offer.</p> <p>Ensure that we have processes in place to share the recommendations from domestic homicide reviews.</p> <p>Continue to support / explore how we improve local provision available to historical victims of domestic abuse and their children.</p>
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### **Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2021-23 – A Whole Picture Approach**

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy will build on previous strategies and will re-inforce local approaches to tackling domestic abuse. Partnership agencies will work in collaboration demonstrating a Whole Picture response, Whole person, Whole Family, Whole Community. Whole Society approach to supporting victims, children, perpetrators and families affected by domestic abuse. We believe the following SafeLives framework sets out the comprehensive and enduring whole picture approach that needs to be in place for domestic abuse to be ended for good.

### **The Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

The Domestic Abuse Bill passed both Houses of Parliament and was signed into law on 29 April 2021.

The Domestic Abuse Act is set to provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. Detailed factsheets on each new measure are available on the government website. The Domestic Abuse Act will :

- create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse;
- create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation;
- extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse;
- extend the ‘revenge porn’ offence to cover the threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress;
- clarify the law to further deter claims of “rough sex gone wrong” in cases involving death or serious injury;
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link);
- establish in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse;
- place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation;
- provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance;
- place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing;
- ensure that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy;
- provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance;
- stop vexatious family proceedings that can further traumatise victims by clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989;
- prohibit GPs and other health professionals from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.



While the Bill is important, not least for public attention to the issue and the establishment of the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner to ensure advocacy continues, the legislation has some very major shortcomings, particularly in its failure to recognise and address the need for community support.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) secured £125 million to cover the cost of new burdens placed upon local authorities in England to meet (and prepare to meet) the new statutory duty relating to the provision of support within domestic abuse safe accommodation. Local Authorities will be required to appoint a multi-agency Local Partnership Board (LPB) to support them in performing certain specified functions. These will be:

- Assess the need for accommodation-based support for all victims and their children, including those who require cross border support.
- Prepare 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 to meet the support needs of victims and their children.
- Monitor and evaluate local delivery of the strategy.
- Report back to Central Government; expected to include:
  - o Reporting on local delivery – setting out how the functions have been executed under the new duty (including reporting on strategy, as well as how partnership working has been approached working across key agencies and across neighbouring areas;
  - Evidence that adequate needs assessments have been undertaken;
  - Evidence that local strategies are in place and working effectively; o Evidence that local commissioning decisions have been informed by needs assessments and that there is adequate suitable provision;
  - An evaluation of the impact of decisions locally including service delivery outcomes;
  - Evidence on spend and feedback on delivery, including challenges faced and best practice.

### **SafeLives Plan for Change**

SafeLives – the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good, which introduced and rolled out IDVA and MARAC functions nationally – presented a 10-point plan for change to the government. We have endorsed their advocacy and align our strategy with their overarching aims to bring about whole person, whole family, whole system change.