

Domestic Abuse Strategy

2025 – 2028

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Foreword

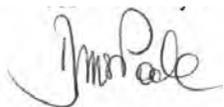
I am delighted to introduce the 2025-2028 New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategy on behalf of the council and our partners.

Domestic abuse can be one of the most harmful crimes in society with far reaching and long-lasting consequences impacting on both adults and children. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact health, wellbeing and development with lasting effects into adulthood. Within the New Forest we have various services, both statutory and voluntary, who work to support families and individuals affected by domestic abuse. In conjunction with the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership this approach strengthens and coordinates commissioned services, specifically for domestic abuse to ensure that survivors get the best and most appropriate support where possible whilst delivering a range of perpetrator programmes aimed at encouraging healthy, non-abusive relationships.

An estimated 2.1 million people (aged 16 years and over) experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 in England and Wales (1.4 million women and 751,000 men)¹. Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Home should be a safe place, where we can relax, nurture our families, invite our friends, enjoy our leisure time and a secure base to return to each time we go out into the world. However, for far too many, home is nothing like that because of domestic abuse.

No one organisation holds the key to taking effective action against domestic abuse, but it is recognised that domestic abuse is everyone's responsibility. This strategy builds on the work already undertaken in our district through effective partnership arrangements, including New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum and the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership.



Cllr Dan Poole
Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety & Wellbeing



¹ [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

Introduction

New Forest District Council’s Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 sets out to prioritise domestic abuse, building on the multi-agency approach and response in working closely with our partners and commissioned services.

NFDC recognises the continued high prevalence of domestic abuse, acknowledging underreporting and the devastating impact it has on the individual, their family, community and wider society.

The development of this strategy sets out our vision, priorities and commitments with the overall aim of reducing incidents of domestic abuse to ensure all those affected receive appropriate support. This strategy fulfils our statutory requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and also incorporates Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda (VAWG agenda) and the Serious Violence Duty 2022.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) placed new duties and functions on Local Authorities under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide support for domestic abuse survivors and their children residing in [safe accommodation](#). The aim is to ensure victim-survivors of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it.



² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse>

³ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>

⁴ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>

⁵ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Definition of domestic abuse⁶

The behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if: -

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

The behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: -

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Domestic abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships, including same sex relationships. Intimate relationships can take different forms, partners do not need to be married or in a civil partnership and abuse can occur between non-cohabitating intimate partners. Young people can experience domestic abuse within their relationships although they may not self-identify as victims-survivors.

Domestic abuse may also be perpetrated by a family member: by children, grandchildren, parents, siblings or extended families.

Children are recognised within the Domestic Abuse Act as being victims-survivors of domestic abuse as they see, hear and experience the effects of

The Act creates the statutory presumption that victims-survivors of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts, putting in place additional protections to support people experiencing abuse.

The prevention of domestic abuse and the protection of all victims-survivors lies at the heart of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (‘the 2021 Act’) and its wider programme of work. The measures in the 2021 Act seek to:

- promote awareness
- protect and support victims-survivors
- hold perpetrators to account
- transform the justice response
- improve performance

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>

National context continued.....

On average, 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.⁷

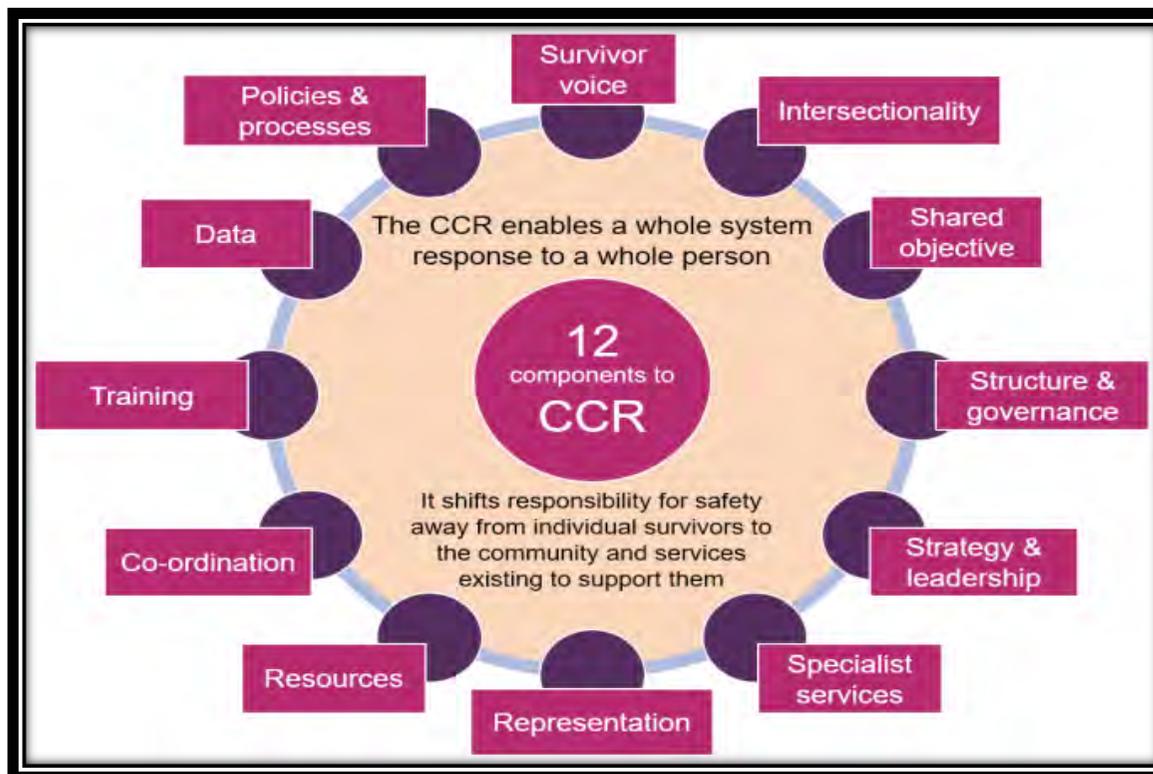
61% of young people demonstrating harmful behaviours are doing so towards their mother (2015).⁸

Domestic abuse is a largely hidden crime which goes unreported.⁹

More than one in four gay men and lesbian women and more than one in three bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16.¹⁰

To tackle and prevent domestic abuse, a Coordinated Community Response¹¹ (CCR) has been created. A CCR is an approach which brings together services, including health, housing, social care, education, criminal justice and communities.

The model below is widely accepted as best practice and one which New Forest District Council will be adopting. The aim is to ensure local systems keep survivors safe, hold abusers to account and prevent domestic abuse.



⁷ <https://refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/the-facts/#:~:text=Domestic%20abuse%20feels%20incredibly%20isolating,call%20999%20in%20an%20emergency.>

⁸ <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>

¹⁰ https://galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Galop_RR-v4a.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/what-is-ccr>

Local context – Hampshire¹²



It is estimated that between **56,003 – 56,935** people over the age of 16 in Hampshire were subjected to domestic abuse in the last year 2023-2024.



40,063*



17,136*



19% of individuals (aged 16+) in Hampshire who are estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse have their experiences recorded as a crime by the police.

Between 2012-2023 there have been **10 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)** in Hampshire.



Around **43,000** children aged under 18 have been exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes during their childhood in Hampshire.

18.9% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were aged between **16 and 24** years old.

*The total count here based on sex is slightly higher than the overall total as the prevalence % is based on England and Wales which is different demographically to Hampshire. This means that some demographic breakdown totals might not align with the overall total.

Of those crimes flagged by Police as being domestic abuse related during 2023-24 in Hampshire:

In Hampshire, the rate of DA flagged crimes per 10,000 population was **107** in 2023-24 compared to **119.6** in 2022/23.

The number of DA flagged crimes have decreased by 1701 in the last year.



The highest rate of individuals who were victims occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old.



36% were an ex-spouse/ ex-partner relationship.

Domestic abuse flagged crimes, rate per 10,000 population by year 2016-2024 for Hampshire, broken down into district/borough

District	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Basingstoke and Deane	88.59	98.77	101.14	111.99	120.40	151.42	122.86	113.03	113.88
East Hampshire	62.51	66.59	65.21	75.24	84.86	101.29	89.82	88.02	79.48
Eastleigh	81.45	93.50	90.72	98.56	107.56	137.63	110.58	105.44	103.51
Fareham	66.37	75.39	75.98	80.29	96.91	116.49	104.45	92.66	88.59
Gosport	122.11	130.02	130.89	138.68	151.66	197.41	186.69	161.26	152.37
Hart	50.72	69.39	60.86	61.47	63.87	73.62	79.92	69.25	66.32
Havant	121.76	142.02	134.69	152.43	168.12	196.31	178.32	153.43	156.04
Isle of Wight	102.42	109.86	117.16	131.77	144.49	165.31	146.40	155.58	134.19
New Forest	70.01	71.83	84.66	92.33	98.04	115.95	110.70	100.96	93.08
Rushmoor	108.37	116.88	127.97	123.69	157.65	173.51	144.07	132.25	135.79
Test Valley	71.57	83.30	82.78	87.85	107.05	127.34	111.82	98.03	96.61
Winchester	65.88	61.84	70.25	78.71	82.33	103.78	100.51	80.94	80.87
Total	83.46	92.06	94.39	102.42	114.20	137.10	122.04	111.38	107.37

A decrease in the number of crimes since June 2023 can be seen. This does not suggest that there has been a decrease in the number of individuals reporting their experiences to the police. The decrease can be primarily attributed to changes in crime counting rules.

¹²Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership

Local context – Hampshire continued¹²

Commissioned services

Between April 2023 and March 2024, approx. **9,200** referrals to commissioned survivor-victim services.

89% were women.

36% of interventions received were 1-2-1 outreach services.

Most common types of domestic abuse experienced by clients:

- Emotional
- Psychological
- Physical



Around **2,750** clients were supported.



51% were aged between 21-40.

From April 2023 – 2024 an estimated:

969 clients were supported by sanctuary schemes.

169 clients were supported through the domestic abuse health advocate's programme.

256 clients were referred to the commissioned perpetrator service.

91% of those were men.



75% were aged between 25-44.

During this period, **276** clients left the service with **27%** of those leaving completing intervention.

Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)



Hampshire & IOW (HIOW) Constabulary has **12** monthly



92% of victim-survivors discussed at MARAC were female.

Annually approx. **4,540** cases were discussed April 2023-March 2024.



The HIOW Constabulary area had a lower rate of cases with LBGT+ victims compared to the England average when adjusting for the population who are LBGT+.



The HIOW Constabulary area continued to have a significantly lower rate of cases where the victim had a disability (**1%**) compared to the England average (10.3%).

The number of cases discussed within MARACs in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary area in 2023/24 was **33%** above the recommended number of cases.

¹²Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data

Local context – New Forest¹³



Overall, in the New Forest it is estimated that between **7,085** – **7,419** individuals were subjected to domestic abuse in the last year 2023-2024.



5,224



2,165

70.7% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were female.



Around **4600** aged under 18 have been exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes during their childhood in New Forest.

18% of individuals (aged 16+) in New Forest who are estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse have their experiences recorded as a crime by the police.

2.2% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were from ethnic minorities.

16.8% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were aged between **16 – 24** years old.



44.5% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse are not in employment.

¹³Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data



In the New Forest, the rate of DA flagged crimes per **10,000** population is **101** was lower than the Hampshire average (107) in 2023/24.

In 2023-24 the highest rate of individuals who were victims occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old and was higher than the Hampshire average rate.



The highest rate of individuals who displayed abusive behaviours (suspects/offenders) also occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old and was higher than the Hampshire average rate for individuals who displayed abusive behaviours who were aged between **25-34** years old. **26.1%** of individuals who displayed abusive behaviours committed more than one DA flagged crime.

The number of DA flagged crimes have decreased by **94** in the last year (2022-23).



A trend with deprivation can be seen with the rate of DA flagged crimes being higher in the **20%** most deprived areas than the average across New Forest.



94

Number of non-fatal strangulation crimes between July 2022-Sept 2024.

¹³Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data

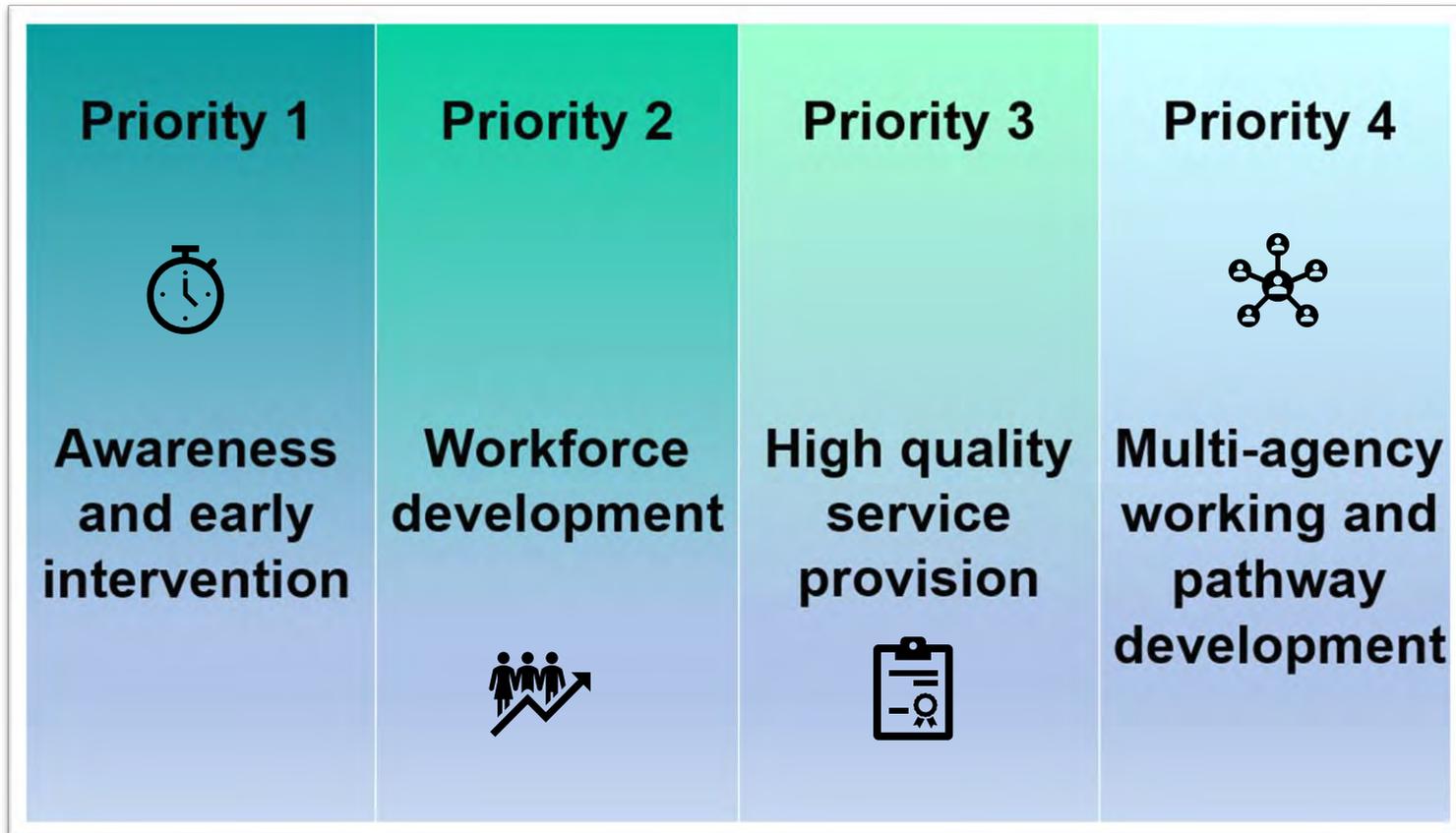
Our strategic priorities



Our response is constructed around 4 key priorities which form areas of work for 2025-2028. New Forest District Council's aim is to;

Prevent and reduce domestic abuse across the New Forest and ensure that when people experience abuse, they can access the help and services they need.

The priorities are aligned to Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and informed by the national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and serious violence duty.



Priority 1 – Awareness & early intervention

New Forest District Council (NFDC) is committed to responding to domestic abuse effectively.

By raising awareness and creating pathways to support for both victim-survivors and perpetrators, NFDC aims to reduce risk and harm and prevent homicide in the most serious of cases.

Victims-survivors can experience difficulty in accessing support services when breaking free from a perpetrator of abuse. A person's needs can impact on and be influenced by other members of a family or their environment. We will take a whole family approach to prevention and early intervention services.

With victim-survivors at the centre, we will share information across service providers to enhance cross collaboration and targeted delivery. We will encourage staff to have professional curiosity to explore and understand what is happening more widely within a setting, highlighting other services who should be involved, and connections made. This requires a collaborative response by all agencies. We will ensure that staff

Our commitments

- Increase knowledge, and awareness of domestic abuse through targeted campaigns.
- Enhance information and advice available on domestic abuse in community settings such as GP surgeries, community centres.
- Deliver additional training to support NFDC employees to be able to identify and respond effectively to domestic abuse at the first opportunity.
- To work collaboratively, improving outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children.
- Through a strategic approach, identify gaps in service delivery, seeking additional funding opportunities.

have appropriate training and supervision and are supported in their work.

Priority 2 – Workforce development

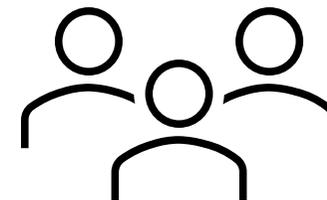
It is recognised that in addition to the mandatory safeguarding training already provided, all NFDC employees will participate in domestic abuse awareness training to enhance early identification and responses to domestic abuse.

Due to the variety of customer services delivered, departments across the Council will benefit from having a domestic abuse champion embedded within their service. The domestic abuse champions will support the dedicated Safeguarding Lead Officers, through enhanced training and awareness to support colleagues and customers.

The dedicated Safeguarding Lead Officers will seek to develop and enhance training opportunities for all staff with a focus on improving the customer journey and access to support.

Our commitments

- Provide a robust response to domestic abuse. All staff will be trained across NFDC departments to recognise, identify, and respond to those vulnerable to domestic abuse both within the community and workplace.
- Develop the knowledge and confidence for all domestic abuse champions. NFDC will ensure the champions receive a bespoke training.
- Domestic abuse champions to disseminate best practice whilst ensuring all reports are taken seriously and appropriate measures taken.



Priority 3 – High quality service provision

It is recognised that having the right support to protect and assist all victims-survivors of domestic abuse will make individuals and families safe, sooner.

As both a landlord and tier 2 local authority, NFDC Housing Services is at the forefront of delivering services to survivors of domestic abuse including providing early housing advice, housing options, prevention and homelessness services to survivors. We also engage with alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse, signposting to specialist support services.

We also provide a fully funded additional security scheme, allowing victims-survivors to remain in their homes through enhanced security measures, should they choose.

The New Forest is served by two dedicated domestic abuse services commissioned by Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP).

Stop Domestic Abuse supports and protects victims-survivors of domestic abuse and stalking, providing a range of services including, refuge and community-based support to adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Our commitments

- Through the collaboration between New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council, we will ensure specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation and support needs of those accessing accommodation are met.
- Educate and develop a cohort of domestic abuse champions across the Council supporting and signposting colleagues and customers with accessing their most appropriate service provision.



The Hampton Trust delivers domestic violence perpetrator programmes within the criminal justice system. They also offer a range of community-based interventions for families experiencing domestic abuse.

Priority 4 – Multi-agency working and pathway development

Robust and joined up multi-agency processes are essential in responding to domestic abuse.

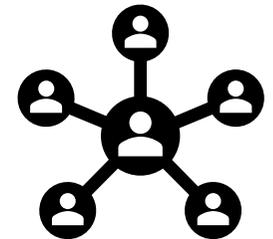
With victims-survivors at the core, proactive risk assessment and information sharing is essential when supporting and reducing risk to survivors and family members whilst providing access to perpetrator-based intervention programmes.

New Forest District Council chair and convene the New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum with the commitment of partner agencies from across the district. Participation includes, commissioned domestic abuse services, health, Hampshire Constabulary, Children & Adult Services, Victim Support with representation from youth services for LGBTQ+ community, Yellow Door, Community First, NFDC Housing and Homestart.

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership is a multi-agency group responsible for supporting the Hampshire County Council geographical area in its domestic abuse response, including the New Forest. The Board and Business Group are responsible in meeting its duty

Our commitments

- Ensure multi-agency working is embedded with clear pathways for agencies in accessing specialist domestic abuse support services.
- Providing a consistent response for victims-survivors, perpetrators, and family members.
- Establish a New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategic Board for effective monitoring and delivery of the domestic abuse strategy.



under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and for monitoring the partnership approach to all other areas of the Act.

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