



Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse  
Strategic Board

# Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy

**2022 – 2025**



# Foreword

We are proud to introduce Oxfordshire's 2022 Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy on behalf of all of the partners across the County who have worked together on its creation .

Domestic abuse is a crime that can affect anyone, having a devastating impact on the lives of victims-survivors and their families. Women are more likely to die from domestic abuse than men, although it is recognized that people of all ages and genders can become victim survivors. The impact can be far greater than the immediate disruption it creates and can cause long term damage to life chances for children and families which can track through generations.

Domestic abuse can also have associated harmful impacts on family stability, mental and or physical health, housing security, educational attainment, and employment. There can also be more subtle effects on self esteem and the ability to build trusting relationships for adults and children victim-survivors.

Domestic abuse must be tackled from many angles and our strategy reflects this in the four pillars of Prevention, Provision, Pursuing and Partnership. Firstly, a focus on prevention will allow us to reduce the occurrences in the future. We can achieve this by promoting healthy relationships for children and young people at an early stage, and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Our provision of effective services will ensure that children and adults affected by domestic abuse are supported to escape their abuser and move towards a life without fear. Provision of perpetrator services aims to reduce future occurrences of abuse. Pursuing the perpetrators will demonstrate no tolerance for abuse, and aims to ensure they recognise the impact of their behaviour. Partnership across the system is vital to ensure the success of this strategy, ensuring all agencies work towards the same goals.

Our strategic developments are co-produced with victim-survivors, allowing the plans to be shaped by lived experience. The Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) comprises of members of the local community who have experiences of domestic abuse. LEAG members work alongside a lived experience consultant to enable a co-production approach to domestic abuse locally, seeking to ensure that victim-survivors, professionals, and commissioners all work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who experience domestic abuse in Oxfordshire.

The Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board is a partnership working together to provide the best outcomes for victims-survivors of domestic abuse and is responsible for delivering duties under the Domestic Abuse Act.

**Councillor Mark Lygo**  
Cabinet Member for Public  
Health and Equalities

**Kate Holburn**  
Chair, Oxfordshire Domestic  
Abuse Strategic Board

**Lisa Ward**  
Lived Experience Advisory Group  
consultant

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# Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Commissioning</b>	The on-going process or cycle of planning, agreeing, and monitoring services. It involves lots of different activities, like researching need, designing services, buying services (procurement), checking how well things are working and making changes to improve them. This process is undertaken with partners
<b>Community-based</b>	Describes an activity that is organised and takes place locally
<b>Co-production</b>	Where professional decision makers and people who use services work together to make decisions and plan, design and deliver services. This approach sees people who use services as best placed to help design them
<b>DASH Risk Assessment</b>	A tool that professionals use to find out how much risk a victim-survivor is at from a perpetrator/s of domestic abuse
<b>Department for Levelling Up, Homes, and Communities (DLUHC)</b>	A central government department that provides grant funding for domestic abuse services linked to safe accommodation and published national guidance to inform service delivery. Oxfordshire County Council submits regular reports to demonstrate value for money and outcomes against national criteria about certain activities. DLUHC used to be called Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
<b>Domestic Abuse Champions Network</b>	A network of trained staff in front facing roles from a wide range of agencies and services who act as a DA Champion for their team / service to develop a strong local multi-agency approach to domestic abuse
<b>Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN)</b>	A new way to offer victim-survivors immediate legal protection following an incident of domestic abuse
<b>Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO)</b>	A new way to offer victim-survivors flexible, on-going legal protection against domestic abuse
<b>Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (or Clare's Law)</b>	A process where the police can tell someone about another person's history of abusive behaviour
<b>Family Solutions Plus</b>	A locally used service in Children's Social Care which prioritises a consistent relationship between a social worker and a family, enabling a continuum of case management support, giving families the best chance of sustaining long-term changes. The model also places adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse workers in the same teams with children's social workers, working to a co-ordinated family plan

<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)</b>	Individuals who usually support victim-survivors who are high risk of serious harm or death due to domestic abuse. They have usually completed a special training course and have a recognised qualification
<b>Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)</b>	A group for residents of Oxfordshire who are 18+ and have experienced domestic abuse. They work with people and organisations to make important decisions about partnership systems and responses to domestic abuse in the county. It is led by an independent person who does not work for Oxfordshire County Council
<b>LGBT+</b>	Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. The + means we are including other groups, like people who are 'non-binary' (they do not identify as male or female)
<b>Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)</b>	The processes to manage violent and sexual offenders
<b>Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)</b>	A local process where information about victim-survivors who are high risk of serious harm / death is shared and safety plans are created
<b>Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC)</b>	The process of identifying and tackling behaviour of repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse
<b>Marginalised communities</b>	Groups of people who face discrimination / inequality in society and may be excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. Not everyone who is from a marginalised community has protection from the Equality Act 2010
<b>Offender</b>	A person who has committed a recorded crime
<b>Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS)</b>	A specialist domestic abuse service in Oxfordshire that is funded jointly by Oxfordshire County Council and city and district councils, and the Police and Crime Commissioner. They provide a helpline, 1:1 case management, support groups, outreach work, refuge and other safe accommodation
<b>Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB)</b>	A strategic, multi-agency, professionals' meeting where important decisions for the county are made to ensure improved outcomes for adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse
<b>Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (OxDAP)</b>	A multi-agency, professionals' meeting where partners share their developments from operational work in the county aiming to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach and opportunities for innovation
<b>Partnership working</b>	Two or more separate organisations coming together to achieve a common purpose. They often benefit from pooled expertise and resources

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Perpetrator</b>	A person who is or has used abusive behaviour in their relationship/s
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	The nine groups legally protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
<b>Victim / Survivor / Victim-Survivor</b>	A child or adult who is or has experienced domestic abuse

# Executive Summary

The Oxfordshire Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 – 2025 outlines Oxfordshire’s partnership response across the whole care pathway - from preventing domestic abuse from happening through to the provision of high-quality support for victims-survivors, including children and young people, and work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. It will inform future commissioning of domestic abuse services within Oxfordshire. This strategy replaces the previous Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy, which was developed in 2019.

A separate Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy was developed and published in January 2022. The Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy and Safe Accommodation Strategy have been aligned and should be read in tandem.

In 2021, Oxfordshire County Council conducted a needs assessment looking at the number of victims-survivors, including children and young people, of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire and the current provision of services available to meet their needs. The estimated number and current provision of services for perpetrators was also included in the needs assessment.

The total estimated number of domestic abuse victims in Oxfordshire in year ending 2020 was 27,455. In comparison, the total number of police recorded domestic abuse victims in Oxfordshire in year ending 2020 was 7,851. The synthetic estimate is significantly higher than the recorded number as only a proportion of victims report domestic abuse to the police. Females are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse (69% female compared to 29% male) in Oxfordshire, which aligns with national data. There has been a 10% increase in the police recorded number of domestic abuse victims in Oxfordshire in year ending December 2020 compared to the average of the previous 3 years. The total number of police recorded domestic abuse crimes involving children in Oxfordshire was 3,238 in 2019/20 and there has been a consistent increase since 2012/13.

There are specific groups of the population who are more vulnerable and at increased risk of experiencing domestic abuse, such as people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, people with long-term illness or disability, those who identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+), older adults (those over 61 years), those with mental health and complex needs and/or drug and alcohol misuse, and pregnant victims (please see Appendix B for a complete list for supporting all victims of domestic abuse with each relevant protected characteristic). There is limited local data at the current time about the numbers of victims of domestic abuse broken down by these population groups.

The total number of police recorded domestic abuse perpetrators in Oxfordshire in year ending 2020 was 7,397. Males are more likely to be perpetrators of domestic abuse (70% male compared to 29% female) in Oxfordshire, which aligns with national data.

Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy (2022-2025) is constructed around four key strategic priorities:



### 1. PREVENTION

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.



### 2. PROVISION

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.



### 3. PURSUING

Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.



### 4. PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

For each key priority, the strategy outlines what Oxfordshire is already doing, what has been learned from the needs assessment, and how Oxfordshire will improve the services in the future.

Annual delivery plans for the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy will be developed by the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB) with support from newly established working or partnership groups. These will be responsive to changes in needs of the population and an evolving evidence base.

ODASB will also develop and agree baseline measures and targets to monitor the impact of the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy. These will evidence the progress being made to meet the four strategic priorities and needs of the domestic abuse population in Oxfordshire.



# 1.

## **Why is the overarching domestic abuse strategy important?**

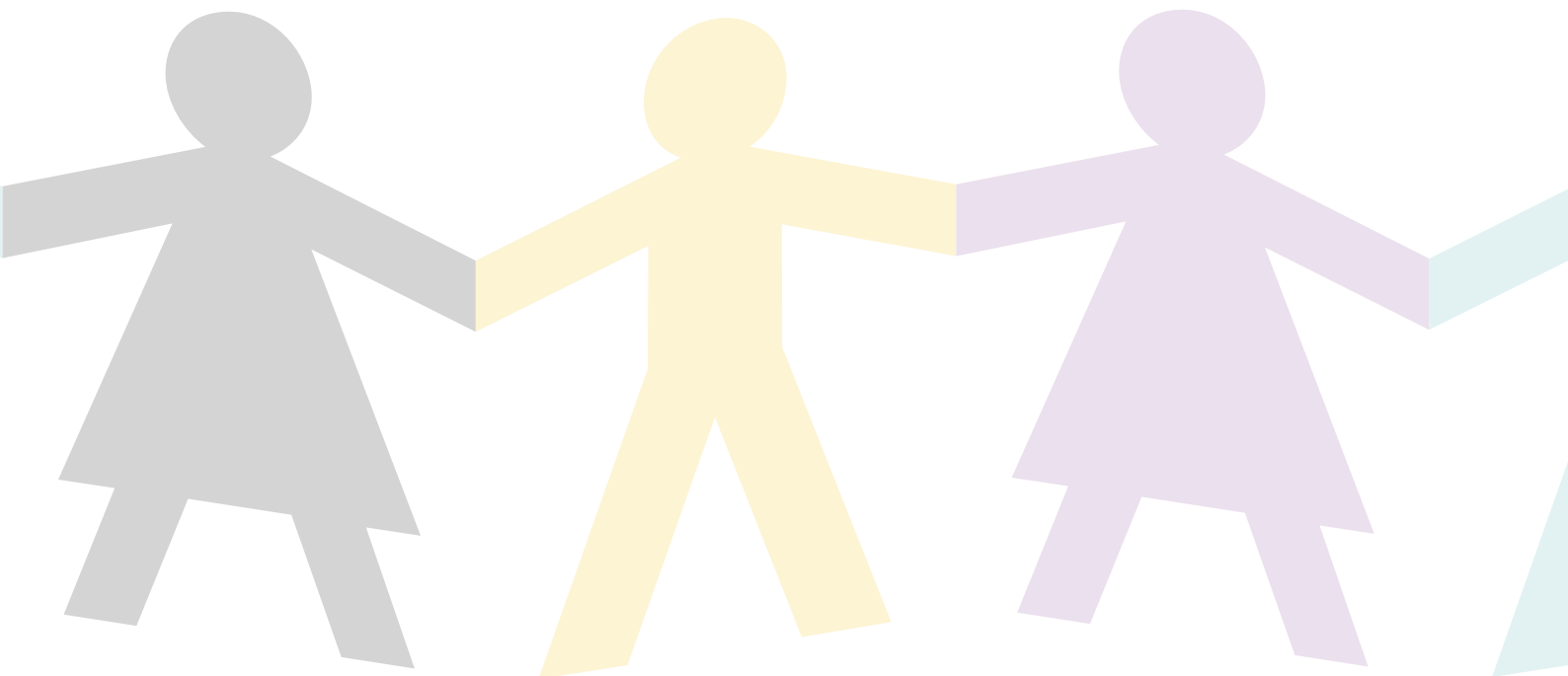


## What is the scope of the strategy?

The Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 – 2025 outlines Oxfordshire’s partnership response across the whole care pathway - from preventing domestic abuse from happening through to the provision of high-quality support for victims-survivors<sup>1</sup>, including children and young people, and work with perpetrators<sup>2</sup> of domestic abuse. It will inform future commissioning of domestic abuse services within Oxfordshire. This strategy replaces the previous Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy, which was developed in 2019.

A separate Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy was developed and published in January 2022.

Whilst both the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy and Safe Accommodation Strategy cover three- year periods, they will be reviewed annually. This will ensure that they are responsive to changes in needs of the population and an evolving evidence base.



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1. Throughout this strategy the terms ‘victim’ or ‘victim-survivor’ has been used to denote a victim/survivor/individual with lived experience of domestic abuse. The terms can be used interchangeably recognising that every person who has been subject to abuse will have their own preferred language.

2. Throughout this strategy the term ‘perpetrator’ has been used to denote anyone who uses or who has used abusive behaviour in a relationship(s).

# What is domestic abuse?

**The Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Coordinators' Network have developed the following definition:**

Domestic abuse is any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.

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; or psychological, emotional or other abuse. This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (e.g., a child). Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

This incorporates harmful traditional practices for example but not limited to 'honour' killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

## Personally connected means two people who:

- Are, or have been, married to each other
- Are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- Have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
- Have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
- Are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- Have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- Are relatives

## Children as victims of domestic abuse:

- Sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse and is related to either person
- The person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child
- The child and person are related
- Child means person under the age of 18 years

The Thames Valley definition reflects the statutory definition for domestic abuse as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021<sup>3</sup> and outlined in Appendix A.

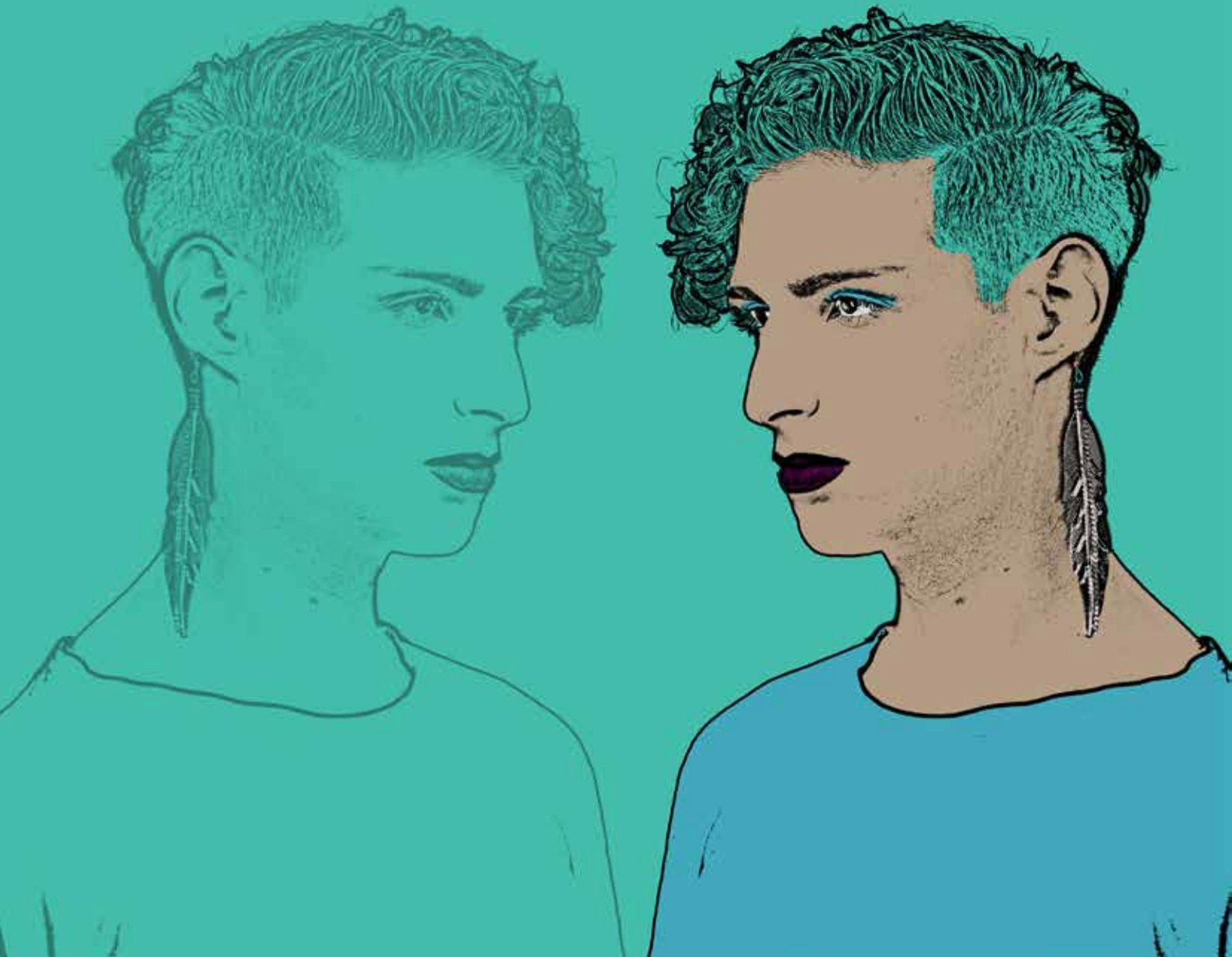
See Appendix B for information on supporting all victims, including those with relevant protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010.

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3. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Statutory guidance: Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services. Published 1 October 2021. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services)

# 2.

## What is the strategic and local context within Oxfordshire?



# What is the wider strategic context?

On the 29th April, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent. It brings wide reaching changes in protective legislation and provides a new definition of domestic abuse as outlined previously. The act also places duties on Oxfordshire County Council including to appoint a multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions.

On 14th April 2021, Oxfordshire County Council appointed the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB) as its domestic abuse local partnership board. This is multi-agency and is made up of both county and local district councils.

## Role of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB)

The ODASB is a partnership group responsible for providing strategic leadership for domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. Its purpose is:

- To assess the needs of the population for domestic abuse services, and define strategies (including a safe accommodation strategy) to address these needs. This includes the needs of those with protected characteristics, and children and young people
- To embed a Coordinated Community Response across Oxfordshire, ensuring all partner organisations are informed and engaged in the strategic and operational response to domestic abuse
- To ensure ongoing monitoring of domestic abuse data and intelligence, including risk and protective factors, prevalence, incidence and outcomes, to inform strategic priorities and delivery plans
- To ensure the provision of domestic abuse services meets the needs of the Oxfordshire population, addressing gaps in support, based on local intelligence
- To work in a co-ordinated way to hold perpetrators to account and change abusive behaviours
- To oversee the spending of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) grant ensuring allocation of resources that support strategy delivery and associated delivery plans
- To support local authorities and partner agencies in Oxfordshire in meeting their duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- To lead on strategic communications regarding domestic abuse

The ODASB reports into the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Partnership Board. It will also report back to DLUHC on delivering the duty in line with statutory guidance.

### **The Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy has also been informed by and will support the delivery of:**

- Oxfordshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Thames Valley's Police and Crime Plan
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Safeguarding Board Plans
- County and District Community Safety Plans
- Housing and Homelessness Strategies
- Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit Strategies
- Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment
- Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan
- Police and Crime Plan for the Thames Valley by the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Thames Valley Police Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

### **The importance of a Coordinated Community Response**

Oxfordshire has committed to taking a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to tackle domestic abuse. At the core of the CCR is the understanding that true change in the response to domestic abuse can only be achieved when all the relevant agencies work together effectively. The CCR is a whole systems approach which enables agencies to recognise tackling and responding to this type of abuse as part of their core business. It fortifies and embeds a collective response to create safer communities which protect victims-survivors, including children and young people, and holds perpetrators to account.

## What is the local context?

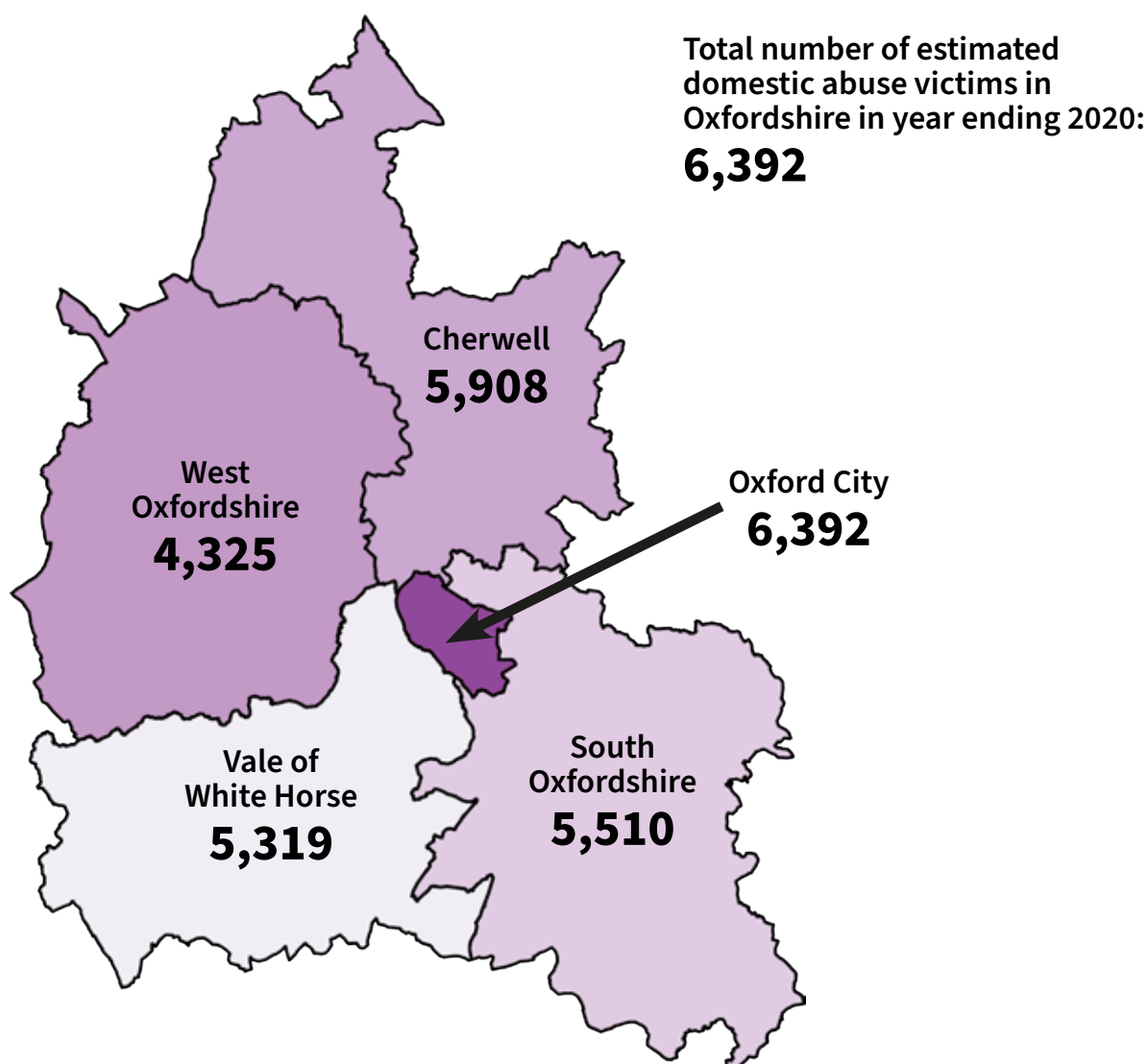
In 2021, Oxfordshire County Council conducted a needs assessment looking at the number of victims-survivors, including children and young people, of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire and the current provision of services available to meet their needs. The estimated number and current provision of services for perpetrators was also included in the needs assessment. A range of national and local statistics are summarised to provide an overview and snapshot of the current profile in Oxfordshire.

### Key statistics on domestic abuse victims-survivors who are ADULTS in Oxfordshire

The number of victims of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire is calculated using either national data which is modelled to produce a synthetic estimate for Oxfordshire or local data from police and crime datasets to produce recorded or known numbers for Oxfordshire.

What is the **estimated** number of domestic abuse adult victims in Oxfordshire?

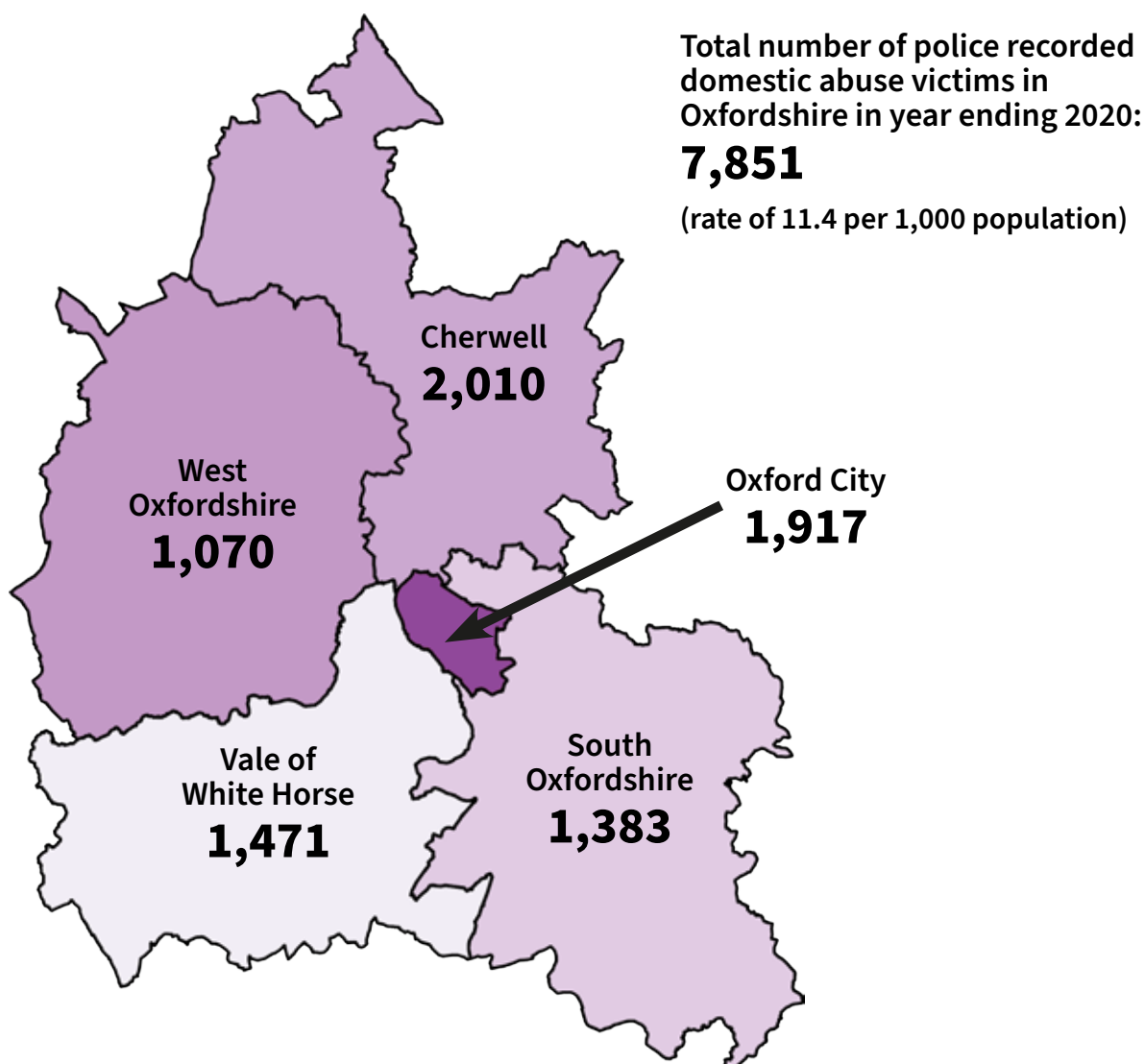
Figure 1: Map of estimated number of domestic abuse adult victims by district in Oxfordshire<sup>4</sup>:



4. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (synthetic estimate)

What is the **recorded** number of domestic abuse adult victims in Oxfordshire?

Figure 2: Map of recorded number of domestic abuse adult victims by district in Oxfordshire<sup>5</sup>:



The synthetic estimate is significantly higher than the recorded number as only a proportion of victims report domestic abuse to the police. This highlights that the local dataset represents only a proportion of victims and therefore there is a large unrecorded number of victims of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire.

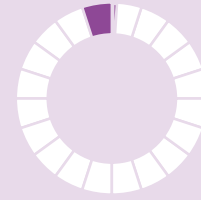
<sup>5</sup> Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System - Niche RMS





Overall, in the year ending 31 March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over

**£66 billion**  
in England and Wales<sup>6</sup>.



The national prevalence of domestic abuse was **5.5% (2.3 million)** among people aged 16-74 in 2020, which equates to 7.2% women and 3.7% men<sup>9</sup>.



**10% increase** in the police recorded number of domestic abuse victims in Oxfordshire when comparing year ending December 2020 with the average of the previous 3 years (2017 to 2019)<sup>7</sup>.

The increase may be real, or due to improved recording by the police, or both.



**Over a quarter (29%)** of recorded domestic abuse victims were subject to repeat occurrences or repeat victimisation in Oxfordshire in 2020<sup>10</sup>.



Females are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse:

**69% recorded as female compared to 29% male**

in year ending December 2020 in Oxfordshire<sup>8</sup>.  
This aligns with national data.

**The recorded number of domestic abuse victims by other local statutory services, such as health (primary and secondary care) and social care, is not available.**

6. Oliver R et al (2019). The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Research Report 107. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/918897/horr107.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918897/horr107.pdf) [accessed 01.02.22]

7. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System - Niche RMS

8. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System -Niche RMS

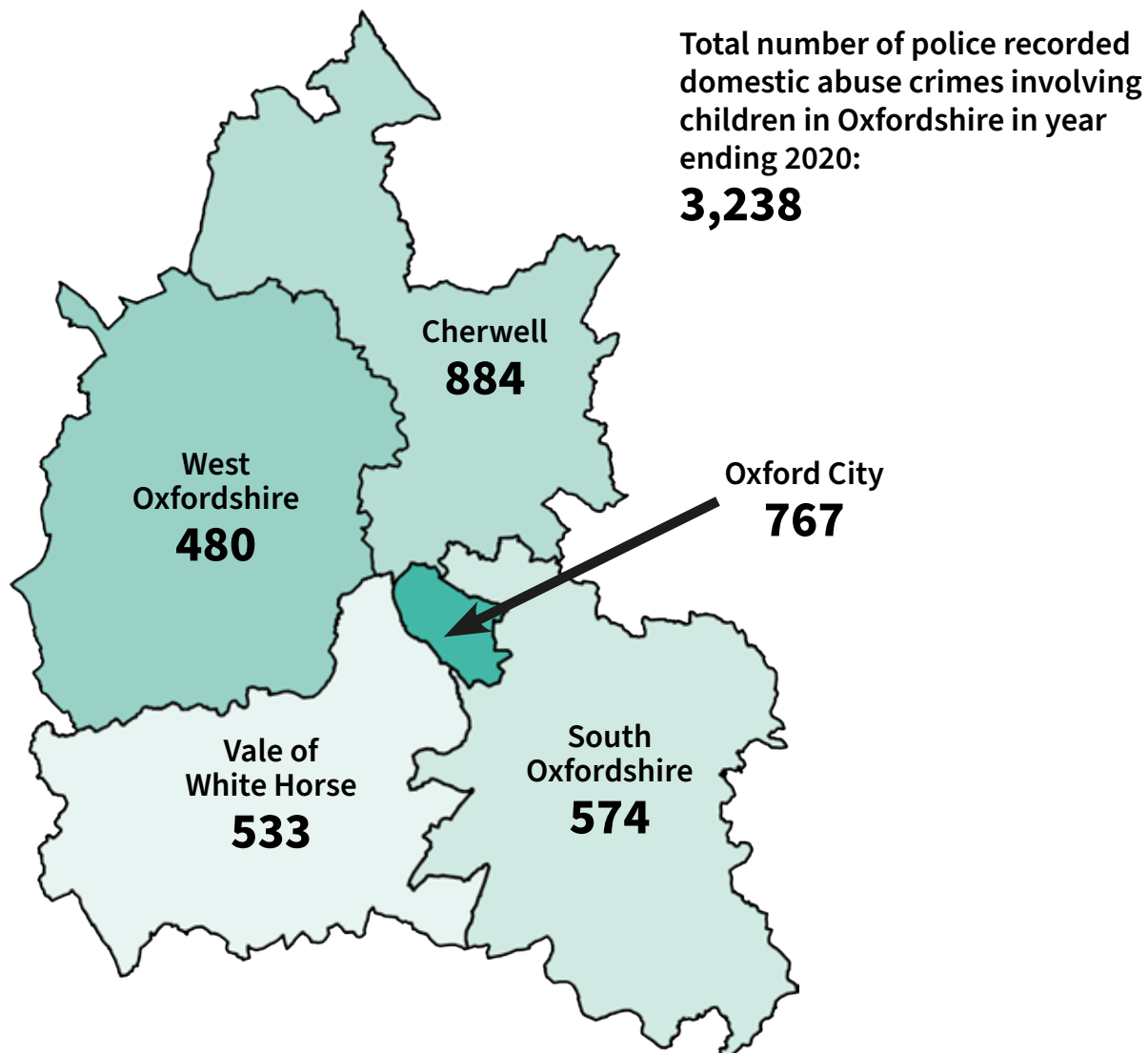
9. Office for National Statistics. Crime Survey for England and Wales (March 2021)

10. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System -Niche RMS

## Key statistics on domestic abuse victims-survivors who are CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE in Oxfordshire

What is the recorded number of domestic abuse crimes involving children in Oxfordshire?

Figure 3: Map of recorded number of domestic abuse crimes involving children by district in Oxfordshire<sup>11</sup>:



11. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System - Niche RMS



It is estimated that  
**20% (1 in 5) children  
in the UK**

are exposed to domestic abuse<sup>12</sup>.



Applying this to the population of Oxfordshire  
(131,373 children aged 0-15 years) it can be  
estimated that

**26,274 children in  
Oxfordshire**

may have experienced or witnessed domestic  
abuse in their childhood.



**13% increase**

in police recorded domestic abuse crimes  
involving children in Oxfordshire when  
comparing 2019/20 with the previous year  
(2018/19)<sup>13</sup>.

The increase may be real, or due to improved  
recording by the police, or both.



**2,286 children**

in the Thames Valley were recorded as being in  
domestic abuse households as part of MARAC  
(the highest risk domestic abuse cases) in  
2019/20<sup>15</sup>.



At a national level, of those aged 13-17,

**25% of girls and  
18% of boys**

report having experienced some form of  
physical violence from an intimate partner<sup>14</sup>.



At a national level, of those aged 13-17,

**31% of girls and  
16% of boys**

report some form of sexual abuse within  
their relationships<sup>16</sup>.

12. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

13. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System - Niche RMS

14. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

15. SafeLives MAARC data England and Wales April 2019 - March 2020

16. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

## Key statistics on victims-survivors who are at GREATER RISK of suffering domestic abuse in Oxfordshire

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of any personal or protected characteristics. There are, however, specific groups of the population who are more vulnerable and at increased risk of experiencing domestic abuse. There is limited local data on numbers of victims of domestic abuse broken down by these population groups. National data provides some insights:



### People with a **long-term illness or disability**

compared to those without are considerably more likely to be victims-survivors of domestic abuse.

34.8% of adults aged 16-59 and 52.1% of adults aged 60-74 with experience of partner abuse had long-standing illness or disability<sup>17</sup>.

Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women<sup>18</sup>.



The prevalence of all types of abuse among **LGBT+ victims-survivors** is higher than among those who do not identify themselves as LGBT+ and there are higher rates of repeat experiences of abuse and discrimination over their lifetime (i.e. 'poly-victimisation').

13% of LGBT+ people experience partner abuse per year compared to 8% of non-LGBT+<sup>19</sup>.

17. Office for National Statistics. Crime Survey for England and Wales (March 2020)

18. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Hidden Victims. Disabled Survivors Too: Disabled people and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Disabled%20Survivors%20Too%20CORRECTED.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

19. SafeLives (2018). Spotlight Report. Free to be safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Free%20to%20be%20safe%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]



Victims  
**aged 61+**

compared to those aged 60 and under are much more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member (44% compared to 6%) or current intimate partner (40% compared to 28%)<sup>20</sup>.



Domestic abuse is  
**more frequent during pregnancy.**

It is estimated that approximately 6.7% of pregnant women are abused during their pregnancy or soon after the birth<sup>23</sup>.

An estimated 500 women in Oxfordshire may experience domestic abuse during pregnancy and postnatally every year.



Domestic abuse victims with  
**mental health needs**

were more likely to have experienced each type of abuse, particularly sexual abuse (27% compared to 19% for victims without mental health needs)<sup>21</sup>.

Domestic abuse victims with mental health needs are more likely to have problems with

**drug and alcohol use:**

10% had drug misuse problems and 14% had alcohol misuse problems<sup>22</sup>.



20.5% of the victims aged 16-59 and in 2.4% of victims aged 60-74 who experience partner abuse **used drugs** in the last year and/or **consumed alcohol** “almost every day”<sup>24</sup>.

20. SafeLives (2016). Spotlight Report. Hidden Victims. Safe Later Lives: Older people and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Later%20Lives%20-%20Older%20people%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

21. SafeLives (2019). Spotlights Report. Safe and Well: Mental health and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Spotlight%207%20-%20Mental%20health%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

22. SafeLives (2019). Spotlight Report. Safe and Well: Mental health and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Spotlight%207%20-%20Mental%20health%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

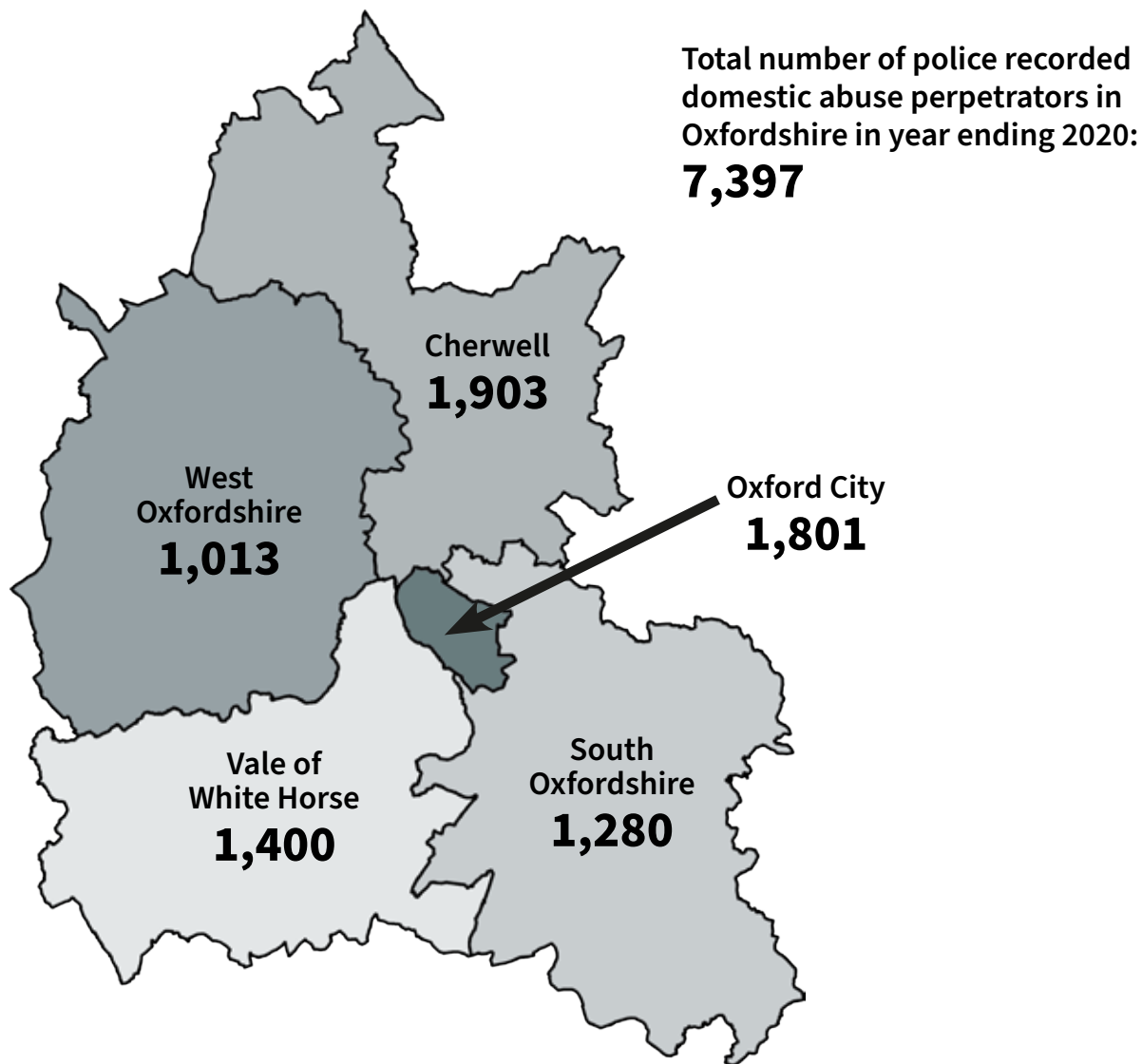
23. Angela Taft [2002]. Accessed 7th October 2021: [https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4067/identifying-caring-for-and-supporting-women-at-risk-of\\_victims-of-domestic-abuse-during-covid-19-v1\\_\\_13052020final.pdf](https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4067/identifying-caring-for-and-supporting-women-at-risk-of_victims-of-domestic-abuse-during-covid-19-v1__13052020final.pdf)

24. Office for National Statistics. Crime Survey for England and Wales (March 2020)

## Key statistics on domestic abuse PERPETRATORS and young people who use abusive behaviour in Oxfordshire

What is the **recorded** number of domestic abuse perpetrators in Oxfordshire?

Figure 4: Map of recorded number of domestic abuse perpetrators by district in Oxfordshire<sup>25</sup>:



25. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System -Niche RMS



Males are more likely to be perpetrators (suspects and offenders) of domestic abuse:

**70% recorded as male compared to 29% female**

(1% not recorded) in year ending December 2020 in Oxfordshire<sup>26</sup>.

This aligns with national data



National data indicates that

**1 in 4 high-harm perpetrators**

are repeat offenders and some have at least six different victims<sup>28</sup>.



Nationally, 61% of young people aged 13-17 who were demonstrating harmful behaviour were doing so

**towards their mother<sup>27</sup>.**

26. Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System -Niche RMS

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

28. <https://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/latest-marac-data>

## Key statistics on domestic abuse SERVICES in Oxfordshire

There are **1,098** registered Domestic Abuse (DA) Champions in Oxfordshire as of end of March 2021<sup>29</sup>

Approximately **75 delegates** received “Introduction to domestic abuse” multi-agency training (first step of DA champions pathway) and approximately **75 delegates** received “Impact of domestic abuse on children and families” training (second step of the DA champions pathway) in 2020/21

On average there are approximately **450 new contacts** every quarter to the local domestic abuse helpline although there was an overall downward trend over the last 2 years (2019/20 and 2020/21)<sup>30</sup>

A total of **1,756** new domestic abuse victims accessed the **Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service** (ODAS) in 2020/21, of which 91% were female and 6% male<sup>31</sup>

In 2020/21, of those domestic abuse victims who contacted ODAS, **31% were given advice**, 23% were signposted to services, 21% were signposted to resources, 19% underwent safety planning, 5% were signposted or referred to Victims First and 1% referred to refuge

A total of **509 victims** were supported by the **Independent Domestic Violence Advocates** (IDVA) service in 2020/21, of which 218 were new client referrals in 2020/21 and 291 were already open and carried over from 2019/20

**92% of IDVA clients were female**, those aged 26-50 years made up 64% of all referrals, 69% were reported as white british, and 63% had children in 2020/21

Within the IDVA service for victims, **25% of perpetrators** are recorded to abuse **both alcohol and drugs** in 2020/21

In Oxfordshire, there were **325** Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (**MARAC**) cases, of which **60 were repeats** (18%) in 2020/21 and 350 MARAC cases, of which 44 were repeats (13%) in 2019/20. The reason for the overall decline in cases yet increase in repeat victims is unclear. The number of MARAC cases also varies by district<sup>32</sup>

There have been **14 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)** since 2011 commissioned by Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Oxfordshire

29. Reducing the Risk data on Champions Network for 2020-21

30. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) for Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2020/21, A2Dominion

31. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) for 2020/21, A2Dominion

32. Oxfordshire MARAC Review Group Annual Report 2021



Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) **domestic abuse charging rate** for England and Wales was **70%** in year ending March 2021, which decreased for the third year running<sup>33</sup>

The national **conviction rate was 78%** in the year ending March 2021, which increased for the sixth year running<sup>34</sup>

In year ending March 2021, there were **531 applications** (426 “right to ask”, 105 “right to know”) yet only 55 “right to ask” and 14 “right to know” disclosures were made under the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme**, known as “**Clare’s Law**”<sup>35</sup>. The reason(s) for the low rate of application to disclosure in Oxfordshire is currently unclear

National data found that **less than 1% of perpetrators** receive any form of intervention to address their behaviour<sup>36</sup>

Oxfordshire’s **community domestic abuse perpetrator programme** for those who are medium and standard risk and have child in need or child protection cases (Family Solutions Plus service) had a caseload of **58 perpetrators** (i.e. awaiting interventions, receiving interventions or receiving follow up support) as of the end of December 2021. The service is continuing to develop and accept referrals<sup>37</sup>

There is limited local data recorded on access to services by **marginalised communities** but national data provides some insights

Victims **over 60** will typically experience abuse for **6.5 years** before accessing help compared to approximately 3 years for those under 60<sup>38</sup>

LGBT+ victims-survivors access services at a lower rate than non-LGBT+ victims-survivors. Only **2.5% of victims referred to domestic abuse services identified as LGBT+** and only 1.2% of cases discussed at MARAC were LGBT+. This population group also present with higher levels of risk and complex needs by the time they access support<sup>39</sup>

33. Office for National Statistics. Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseandthecriminaljusticesystemenglandandwales/november2021> [accessed 25.02.2022]

34. Office for National Statistics. Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseandthecriminaljusticesystemenglandandwales/november2021> [accessed 25.02.2022]

35. Thames Valley Police report on Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme requests in Oxfordshire 2020/21.

36. SafeLives (2018). SafeLives Insights National Briefing. Length of abuse and access to services. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%20Insights%20National%20Briefing%20PaperY%20Abuse%20Length.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

37. Elmore Community Services Family Solutions Plus Domestic Abuse Monthly Returns – December 2021

38. SafeLives (2018). SafeLives Insights National Briefing. Length of abuse and access to services. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%20Insights%20National%20Briefing%20PaperY%20Abuse%20Length.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

39. SafeLives (2018). Spotlight Report. Free to be safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Free%20to%20be%20safe%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

Victims of domestic abuse with **mental health needs** were more likely to have visited their GP and A&E before accessing support for the abuse<sup>40</sup>

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Of **16,000 disabled people** experiencing high risk domestic abuse, approximately 13,600 either are not supported by a MARAC or their disability is not identified by the MARAC process<sup>41</sup>

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Nationally, only **45% of young people** (13-17 years old) in an abusive intimate relationship were known to children's social services<sup>42</sup>

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See [Oxfordshire's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation strategy](#) for data on access to refuge, dispersed accommodation and sanctuary schemes.



There is insufficient local information to identify the extent to which the need and demand is exceeding supply for domestic abuse services, and in particular the level of unmet need for those with protected characteristics.

It is predicted that there is a large undocumented need and demand for services and that those currently accessing services are only the tip of the iceberg.

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40. SafeLives (2019). Spotlight Report. Safe and Well: Mental health and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Spotlight%207%20-%20Mental%20health%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

41. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Hidden Victims. Disabled Survivors Too: Disabled people and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Disabled%20Survivors%20Too%20CORRECTED.pdf> [accessed 01.02.2022]

42. SafeLives (2017). Spotlight Report. Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse. Available at: <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf> [accessed 01.02.22]

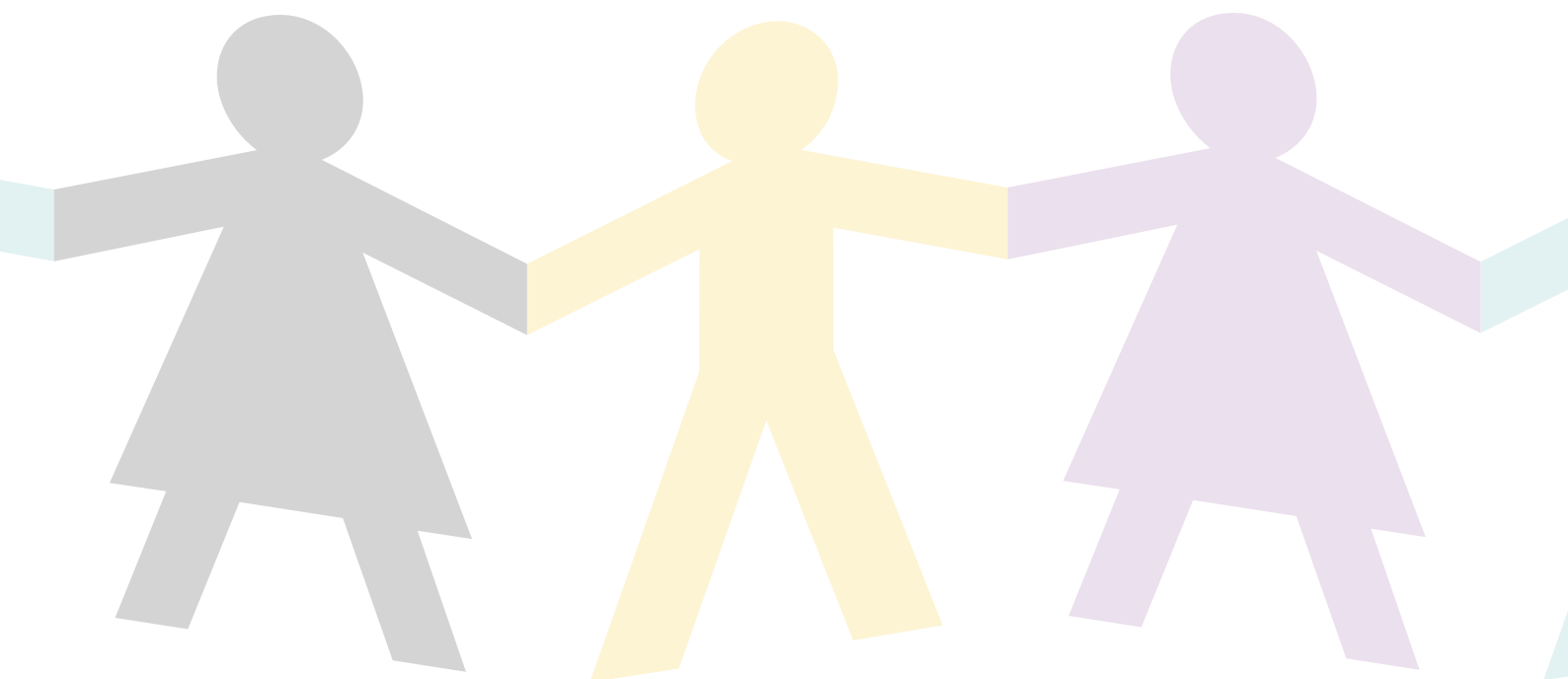
# 3.

**What is the vision, aim and the key priorities in the overarching domestic abuse strategy?**



# Vision statements

- Oxfordshire has a sufficiently funded and coordinated community response across all services and partnerships to deliver the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy, recognising domestic abuse as an issue of Violence Against Women and Girls, informed by aligned policies, shared system leadership, and allocation of resources
- Victims-survivors, professionals and communities recognise that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and they are empowered to challenge behaviours which may contribute towards abuse
- All residents, no matter their protected characteristic(s)<sup>43</sup>, are aware of domestic abuse services and are able to access them
- Perpetrators will be held to account, including being pursued under the criminal justice system, and will also have access to a range of interventions that support behaviour change
- All organisations in Oxfordshire work to raise awareness of domestic abuse and help to reduce the harm and keep people safe
- Oxfordshire is committed to invest in a range of approaches to keep people safe including the prevention of domestic abuse. This includes ensuring adults, children and young people understand how to achieve healthy relationships



43. Under the Equality Act 2010, there are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

# Aim

To improve outcomes for adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse by working in partnership to:

- Reduce the risk and harm; and
- Provide high quality evidence-based early intervention and support to lead safe and fulfilling lives.

Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy (2022-2025) is constructed around four key strategic priorities, which align with the pillars identified in the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategies:



## 1. PREVENTION

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.



## 2. PROVISION

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.



## 3. PURSUING

Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.



## 4. PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

These priorities will instruct and inform the delivery plans and key areas of work over the next three years.

The Overarching Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy has been aligned with the [Safe Accommodation Strategy](#), which was published earlier this year.

# Strategic Priority 1: Prevention

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.

## What is Oxfordshire already doing to prevent domestic abuse from happening and ensuring those experiencing domestic abuse can access support at an early stage?

- **Awareness:** a degree of centrally coordinated communications and community engagement activities to ensure a consistent message and enable abusive behaviours, their impacts, and routes to support to be identified at an earlier stage, including those specific to different groups and within marginalised communities
- **Access:** co-commissioned Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) provides a local domestic abuse helpline (not 24/7). A number of national domestic abuse helplines also exist some of which are available 24/7. Victims of domestic abuse can access domestic abuse services via any of these helplines and websites. Completed the Thames Valley BAMER (Black Asian Minority Ethnic & Refugee) Project, which included identifying barriers to accessing support
- **Training:** undertook a training needs analysis; developed and delivering a multi-agency domestic abuse training programme for professionals working within services and for Oxfordshire residents to improve and increase domestic abuse awareness, identification and response
- **Domestic Abuse Champions Network:** enabling Domestic Abuse Champions in key teams and in the community to provide advice across their organisations or communities and support early identification of domestic abuse
- **Education settings:** rolled out Operation Encompass across all primary and secondary schools in Oxfordshire. Operation Encompass is a national initiative which aims to support children affected by domestic abuse. A number of local organisations also offer activities which support healthy relationships education in schools
- **Safeguarding:** supported the development of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Oxfordshire, ensuring that domestic abuse issues are an integral part of this new way of working



## What did we learn from the needs assessment?

- Stakeholder engagement identified that **victims-survivors are not aware of all of the types and signs of domestic abuse and the domestic abuse services available** in Oxfordshire that can support them
- Stakeholder engagement identified that **professionals would benefit from more centrally coordinated campaigns and engagement activities**, and one local website for information on domestic abuse services and resources
- Stakeholder engagement identified that **victims-survivors often access domestic abuse services via national helplines instead of the local helpline, which is not available 24/7**
- Stakeholder engagement identified that the **workforce needs increased access to domestic abuse training and the champions network**, and for elements of this to be available face-to-face instead of the change to online due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Stakeholder engagement with Young People identified that Young People affected by Domestic Abuse had different levels of understanding on healthy relationships and the types and signs of Domestic Abuse, and **highlighted a need for improved Relationships and Sex Education both in and outside of school**. They also identified gaps in service provision for young people as well as the need to have Young People's voices heard when addressing Domestic Abuse. See Appendix C highlighting some of the Young People's responses from this engagement.

## How will Oxfordshire improve the services in the future?

- **Develop and deliver a countywide domestic abuse media and communications plan** for the public (adults, children and young people) and professionals. This will aim to: raise awareness of domestic abuse and perpetrator behaviours; reduce the stigma of reporting for victims; facilitate early intervention by increasing the visibility of the specialist services available to those experiencing domestic abuse and increasing the profile of support available for those using abusive behaviour in relationships; and provide easy to understand information/resources on how to access the support for victims-survivors and perpetrators in Oxfordshire. The media and communications plan will be centrally coordinated by Oxfordshire County Council. Explore options for alternative forms of resources in addition to improved web and social media, tailored to the target audience. Consider developing or agreeing on one single local website as the domestic abuse hub for Oxfordshire. This would host information for the public and professionals. The media and communications plan should establish links with the recently established Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) to ensure that the voices of victims-survivors, including marginalised communities, are represented. *See Priority 4: Partnership for information on LEAG*
- **Review and continue to develop the current Oxfordshire multi-agency domestic abuse workforce training programme** for frontline professionals within all services across the county. The aim is to increase domestic abuse identification and improve the consistency of the response in particular for those with protected characteristics and marginalised communities. Consider developing a Domestic Abuse Training Pathway which outlines how to meet the training needs (knowledge and behaviour change) for all key partner organisations and staff, including long-term follow up and support. Extend the training offer to include: working

with marginalised communities and those with protected characteristics (link with LEAG); working with perpetrators and those who use abusive behaviours in relationships; and working with child to parent abuse. The training pathway will also incorporate honour based abuse, stalking and sexual abuse. Consider developing or agreeing on one single local website as the domestic abuse hub for Oxfordshire, which includes details of the domestic abuse training programme and pathway (see *media and communications plan above*). The training pathway will be regularly monitored and evaluated to demonstrate evidence of effectiveness and identify areas for improvement

- **Consider expanding the Domestic Abuse Champions Network** as part of a whole community approach. This would involve professional groups and community members, and appointing specialist champions who take the lead on: a) supporting victims-survivors with protected characteristics and marginalised communities and; b) supporting frontline staff to adapt to meet the needs of these victims-survivors and ensure they are adequately trained and equipped to respond to victims-survivors confidently and sensitively. The champions would also ensure there are robust links with local and national specialist domestic abuse services that support these population groups. Consider including data on monitoring and evaluation of the Champions Network in the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Dashboard

- **Review the current provision of healthy relationships education offered within schools.** Develop and coordinate the delivery of a countywide healthy relationships and behaviours education programme for children and young people, including information about the risks and harms associated with domestic abuse
- **Review the effectiveness of Operation Encompass** in Oxfordshire in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Broaden the workplace and employer response to addressing domestic abuse** by developing and promoting a training package for employers which raises awareness of domestic abuse, how to identify it and how to respond. Develop and implement workplace domestic abuse policies and procedures in line with local and national best practice guidance



## Strategic Priority 2: Provision

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.

### What is Oxfordshire already doing around the provision of domestic abuse services?

- **Specialist services to support high-risk cases:** support includes community Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs)
- **Specialist support from community IDVAs for specific groups of the population** which are provided by a range of different organisations: Court IDVA, Young People's IDVA for 16-25 year olds, BAMER IDVA, Children's Independent Domestic/Sexual Violence Advisor (ChIDVA/ChISVA), Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), and an LGBT+ IDVA
- **Outreach community services for medium and standard risk:** provided by the co-commissioned Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS)
- **Needs-led 1-2-1 work with non-abusive parents, for those who are at medium and standard risk and are on Child In Need or Child Protection plans:** Delivered by Elmore Community Services for Family Solutions Plus
- **Domestic abuse support programmes:** a range of different groups delivered by a variety of organisations from various funding streams
- **Specialist support for marginalised groups, those with protected characteristics and/or multiple complex needs:** limited provision from a number of different organisations
- **Support for children and young people:** primarily in the form of a group based programme
- **Universal services** (e.g., police, primary and secondary health care, mental health and counselling, child and adult social care and safeguarding teams, probation, civil and criminal justice system) are working with individuals and families affected by domestic abuse in varying capacities
- **Voluntary organisations:** providing services and support to individuals and families across a range of areas (e.g., housing and homelessness, mental health and counselling, refugee and asylum seekers, sexual abuse and rape crisis, female genital mutilation, and substance misuse)
- **Oxfordshire domestic abuse pathway** for adults was developed and published in 2019. Oxfordshire domestic abuse pathway for children and young people was audited and re-developed in Autumn 2020
- **Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference** (MARACs) to reduce risk in high-risk cases



Please see the Oxfordshire [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#) for information on the provision of refuge, dispersed accommodation and sanctuary schemes.

## What did we learn from the needs assessment?

- **The existing contract for ODAS**, which includes access, helpline, support groups, outreach work, and provision of refuge and dispersed accommodation, **terminates end of March 2023**
- **Demand for specialist community-based domestic abuse services is exceeding the capacity of the current service provision**, especially for children and young people
- **Insufficient provision of specialist domestic abuse services for marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics**, which is exacerbated by limited data and evidence base for providing effective support for these communities
- Despite **a number of different mental health, counselling and substance misuse services** being provided across statutory and voluntary sector organisations in Oxfordshire, **stakeholder engagement identified long waiting lists for mental health and counselling services and inadequate provision of interventions for victims-survivors**, including children and young people
- There is a **need to develop an improved understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people** in Oxfordshire and use that understanding to make plans to address needs and any gaps in service
- The **provision of domestic abuse support and services in Oxfordshire for those in the armed forces is unknown**

## How will Oxfordshire improve the system and services in the future?

- **Undertake a robust procurement process for the following: co-commissioned specialist community-based provider for the ODAS, specialist support for high risk victims including IDVAs, and specialist services for people with protected characteristics and marginalised communities.** The contracted services will be designed to address the local need identified in the needs assessment. Commissioners across the county, districts and Police and Crime Commissioner will collaborate to ensure value for money, avoid duplication of service delivery and improve outcomes
- **Embed the co-production of services with victims-survivors into the future commissioning and provision of all services.** This ensures that the views of people with lived experience are embedded within services and that the services are informed by the views of those who have been affected by domestic abuse or are at significant risk of it. This will require establishing strong links with the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), developing specific partnerships with specialist organisations who work with these communities, and creating specialist lead workers and teams for specific marginalised groups (e.g. LGBTQ+, BAMER, etc). *See Appendix B for information on supporting all victims-survivors. See Priority 4: Partnership for information on LEAG*
- **Commissioners will ensure there is specialist and dedicated provision for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.** It is recognised that this is a high priority area and there is a need to commit to an increased allocation of funds for the specialist provision of services for children and young people who are victims-survivors of domestic abuse

- **Ensure a multi-agency partnership group has a focus on children and young people (0-18 years) affected by domestic abuse in their families and in their own intimate partner relationships.** Strategic partners will ensure that domestic abuse is reflected in their local partnership arrangements. This can include: reviewing the provision of children and young people's services with a focus on the child; continuing to support and collaborate with the Family Solutions Plus multidisciplinary children's social care service; reviewing and developing the best practice guidance around commissioning and providing age appropriate services and the transition of young people into adult services; supporting the co-production of services including reviewing existing services and contributing to the commissioning and procurement of new services to address the gaps in provision; reviewing and revising the existing domestic abuse pathway for young people; and supporting the development and delivery of training and resources for professionals working with children and young people
- **Expand on the initial mapping of services within the needs assessment by conducting a whole system mapping of the mental health, counselling and substance misuse services provided in Oxfordshire for victims-survivors, including children and young people.** This should include the demand for each of the services, waiting times, barriers to access, and recommendations for improving future service provision. Based on the findings complete an options appraisal to identify how best to meet the unmet need. Explore the co-production or commissioning of services, development of joint working across domestic abuse services for those with mental health issues, substance misuse issues and wider complex needs, or the introduction of domestic abuse champions in mental health services
- **Annually review and revise the pathways in response to changes in population needs and the availability and access to services** (e.g. pathway to and from mental health, counselling, substance misuse, housing and homelessness). Pathways to be supported by a directory of services. *See Priority 4: Partnership for information on directory of local services*
- **Continue to review and update the information about all domestic abuse support groups and programmes being delivered for victims-survivors, including children and young people,** across the county. Follow national guidance for the commissioning of Domestic Abuse services, including assuring the performance and quality of services through robust monitoring and evaluation. *See Priority 4: Partnership for information on directory of local services*
- **Explore the feasibility of providing long-term commissioning of services to ensure sustainable delivery in the future, where possible.** It is recognised that this is subject to national funding opportunities and threats
- **Explore options to ensure effective support and interventions for victims-survivors and their families via the introduction of the new civil Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN) to provide immediate protection following a domestic abuse incident, and new civil Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) to provide flexible, longer-term protection for victims<sup>44</sup>.** The domestic abuse act repeals existing Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)
- **Consider the needs of those in the armed forces to recognise the responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant.** Identify gaps in service provision and explore ways to meet the unmet needs

44. Home Office policy paper: Domestic Abuse Protection Notices / Orders factsheet: Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-protection-notices-orders-factsheet> [accessed 14.02.2022]

# Strategic Priority 3: Pursuing

Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.

## What is Oxfordshire already doing to ensure that perpetrators are held to account and provided with specialist support that addresses these behaviours?

- **Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination** (MATAC) groups to disrupt serial perpetrators and support them to address their behaviour
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement** (MAPPA) for high-risk violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public
- Locally conducted multi-agency **Domestic Homicide Reviews** (DHRs) and annual reports.
- Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (**DASH**) **Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC)** endorsed as preferred risk assessment tool for all professionals working with victims-survivors. DOM5 police risk indicator checklist based on DASH. Supplementary questions on honour based violence and stalking are completed where relevant
- **Court mandated perpetrator programme** delivered through probation services: Building Better Relationships (BBR)
- **Community domestic abuse perpetrator programme** for those who are medium and standard risk and have child in need or child protection cases: Delivered by Elmore Community Services for Family Solutions Plus
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Plan (MARAMP)** for children and young people linked to 'risky behaviour'
- **Support and group programme** (Building Respectful Families) for young people who use abusive behaviour towards their parents
- **Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service** (CAHBS) for young people whose sexual behaviour causes concern



## What did we learn from the needs assessment?

- Strategic and operational stakeholders identified the **need to break the cycle of domestic abuse by addressing perpetrator behaviour, holding individuals to account and providing support** that facilitates the development of healthy relationship behaviours
- **A formal pathway of specialist support services or interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse** does not exist in Oxfordshire
- **Limited provision of specialist support services or interventions across Oxfordshire for perpetrators of domestic abuse** across all levels of risk and harm
- **Support for children and young people with abusive behaviours is limited** apart from one service provider with limited capacity. There is a gap in service provision for young people who use abusive behaviour in relationships
- **Victims-survivors report negative experiences of accessing the criminal and civil justice systems and family court systems.** The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation and resulted in longer delays

- **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)**, also known as “Clare’s Law”, in Oxfordshire, are lower compared to other police forces.
- **Cautions and Relationship Abuse (CARA) programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse has been piloted by Thames Valley Police** in Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire. Further geographical roll out may include Oxfordshire and allow for a partnership approach with Oxfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

## How will Oxfordshire improve the system and services in the future?

- **Establish a multi-agency joint commissioning group for perpetrators of domestic abuse.** The group will be responsible for: continuing to review the emerging evidence base and seek expert opinion; implementing best practice guidance around commissioning and providing safe and effective local perpetrator services; supporting the co-commissioning, procurement and monitoring of new services to address the gaps in provision; supporting the development and delivery of training for frontline staff working with perpetrators
- **Follow national guidance for the commissioning of perpetrator services**, including deciding appropriate programmes, and assuring the performance and quality of services through robust monitoring and evaluation
- **Consider the development and co-commissioning (OCC and OPCC) of new community-based services for young people** to address abusive behaviour in intimate relationships and child to parent abuse
- **Develop a local Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Pathway alongside the co-commissioning of services.** Ensure the pathway provides a clear overview of the current service provision, associated referral routes, and links with the

domestic abuse pathways for victims-survivors in order to aid implementation by frontline staff and support risk management of victims-survivors. Revise the pathway in response to changes in population needs and the availability and access to services

- **Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board to undertake an annual review of the local multi-agency partnership processes, such as MARAC** (see *strategic priority 2, provision*), **MATAC and MAPPA** to ensure they are embedded and working effectively across Oxfordshire:
  - Annual compliance audit of the MARAC data to include consideration of the points outlined by SafeLives national quality assurance framework for MARACs<sup>45</sup>
  - Local evaluation of MATAC and MAPPA to identify how well these are working in practice and areas for improvement
- **Annual audit of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), also known as “Clare’s Law”, in Oxfordshire**, including benchmarking with other areas and identification of strategies to improve application of the guidance by Thames Valley Police in order to increase “right to know” and “right to ask” applications, and reduce re-victimisation
- **Explore ways to improve the criminal and civil justice systems and family court systems from the perspective of the victim-survivor.** Examples to consider include: ongoing funding for the provision of court IDVAs; other court support services for victims in the criminal justice system such as domestic abuse informed Mackenzie Friends; and domestic abuse training for judges and magistrates
- **Develop a partnership working response with OPCC and Thames Valley Police** to improve rates of arrests, reduce repeat perpetrators and increase opportunities for criminal justice intervention

45. SafeLives (2017). 10 Principles of an effective MARAC and Reviewing your local MARAC data. <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/The%20principles%20of%20an%20effective%20MARAC%20FINAL.pdf> and <https://safelives.org.uk/node/521>

## Strategic Priority 4: Partnership

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

### What is Oxfordshire already doing around partnership working?

The following partnership structures relevant to domestic abuse are already in place in Oxfordshire:

- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB)\*
- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (OxDAP)\*
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATA) groups
- [Health and Wellbeing Board](#)
- [Health Improvement Partnership Board](#)
- [Safer Oxfordshire Partnership](#)
- BAED WORLDS Group (now renamed Diverse Worlds)
- District level Community Safety Partnerships:
  - [Cherwell](#)
  - [Oxford City](#)
  - [South Oxfordshire](#)
  - [Vale of White Horse](#)
  - [West Oxfordshire](#)
- [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#)
- [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#)
- [The Children's Trust](#)
- Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Steering Group
- Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Coordinators Network
- Thames Valley BAME Communities Partnership Board (now renamed Thames Valley Diverse Communities Partnership Board)
- Homeless Directors' Group

\*A range of stakeholders across the public, community and voluntary sector are partners of ODASB and OxDAP



### What did we learn from the needs assessment?

- The **collection, management and sharing of data and information across Oxfordshire is inadequate to support the accurate assessment of needs, robust monitoring and evaluation of current service provision, and effective strategic planning for future service provision.** There is insufficient data available on the number of victims-survivors, including children and young people, and perpetrators of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. There is insufficient data and inconsistent data collection across domestic abuse services on the access and use of services by victims-survivors and perpetrators. Further analysis by demographic classifications and socioeconomic characteristics for both the need, demand and supply of services is limited or not available. A data dashboard has recently been set up to improve the collection of domestic abuse data in Oxfordshire

- **A Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) has recently been set up** as a dedicated forum to ensure the lived experiences, voices and views of victims-survivors in Oxfordshire are linked into policy and commissioning processes. This does not currently include representation for the interests of children and young people who are victims-survivors of domestic abuse. There is no similar forum dedicated for hearing the voices and views of perpetrators of domestic abuse
- **An initial mapping of current services available in Oxfordshire was undertaken as part of the needs assessment.** This identified gaps in the current service provision, in particular for children and young people, marginalised communities and those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs, and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Stakeholder engagement also identified the limited awareness across professionals and the public of those domestic abuse services and pathways that do exist
- **Limited national and local evidence base supporting the effectiveness of interventions for victims-survivors, including children and young people, and perpetrators of domestic abuse.** Evidence for supporting specific groups (e.g. LGBT+, BAMER etc) is minimal or non-existent

### How will Oxfordshire improve the system and services in the future?

- **Review the membership of ODASB and OxDAP** to ensure that all key sectors and partners are represented at both strategic and operational level. Review the Terms of Reference and purpose of both groups. Monitor attendance and engagement of partners at both groups
- **Continue to develop the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Dashboard (DAD):** a multi-agency database for domestic abuse with agreed mechanisms for the collection, analysis and sharing of data across services for victims-survivors, including children and young people,

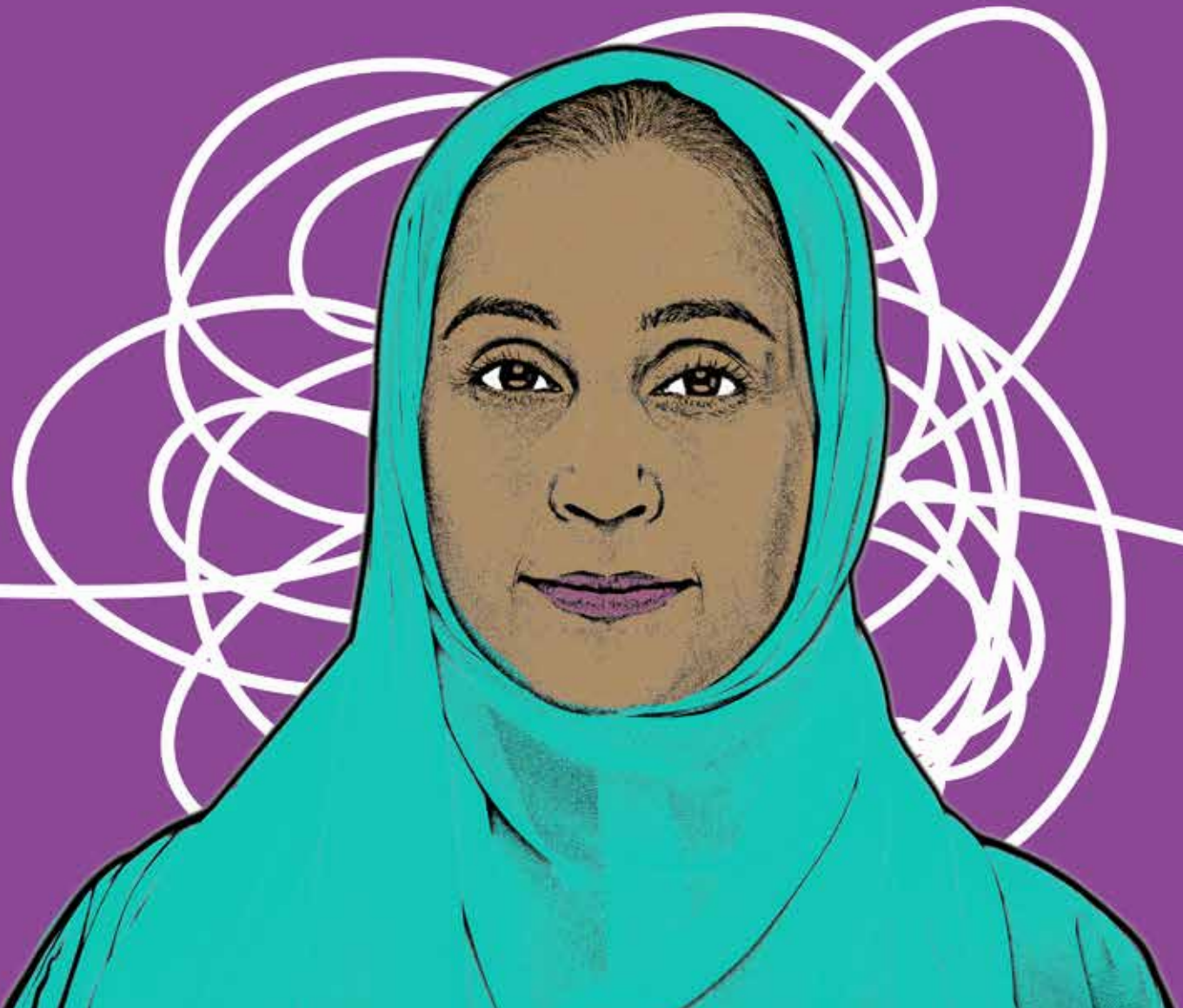
and perpetrators. See *Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy*. Future commissioning and funding decisions to be informed by DAD which will provide more accurate estimates of the need and supply of domestic abuse services in Oxfordshire. DAD will report into ODASB (and OxDAP) to enable learning to be shared with all stakeholders

- **Continue to progress the development of the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) for engaging with adult victims-survivors.** See *Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy*. Explore ways to engage with and incorporate the voices of children and young people who are victims-survivors of domestic abuse. Explore separate options for engaging with perpetrators of domestic abuse
- **Ensure there is a multi-agency partnership group(s) with specific focus on children and young people, and perpetrators.** See “Priority 2: Provision” and “Priority 3: Pursuing” for details of the partnership group and joint commissioning group. All newly established multi-agency groups will report to ODASB and link with OxDAP
- **Develop a directory of local domestic abuse services to support the referral pathways.** Ensure all OCC commissioned services meet national standards for quality and performance. The directory of services will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis to ensure it remains up-to-date and easily accessible to victims-survivors, perpetrators and professionals. Consider and identify an appropriate online platform to host the directory of services

Please see the Oxfordshire [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#) for information on partnerships relevant to safe accommodation in Oxfordshire.

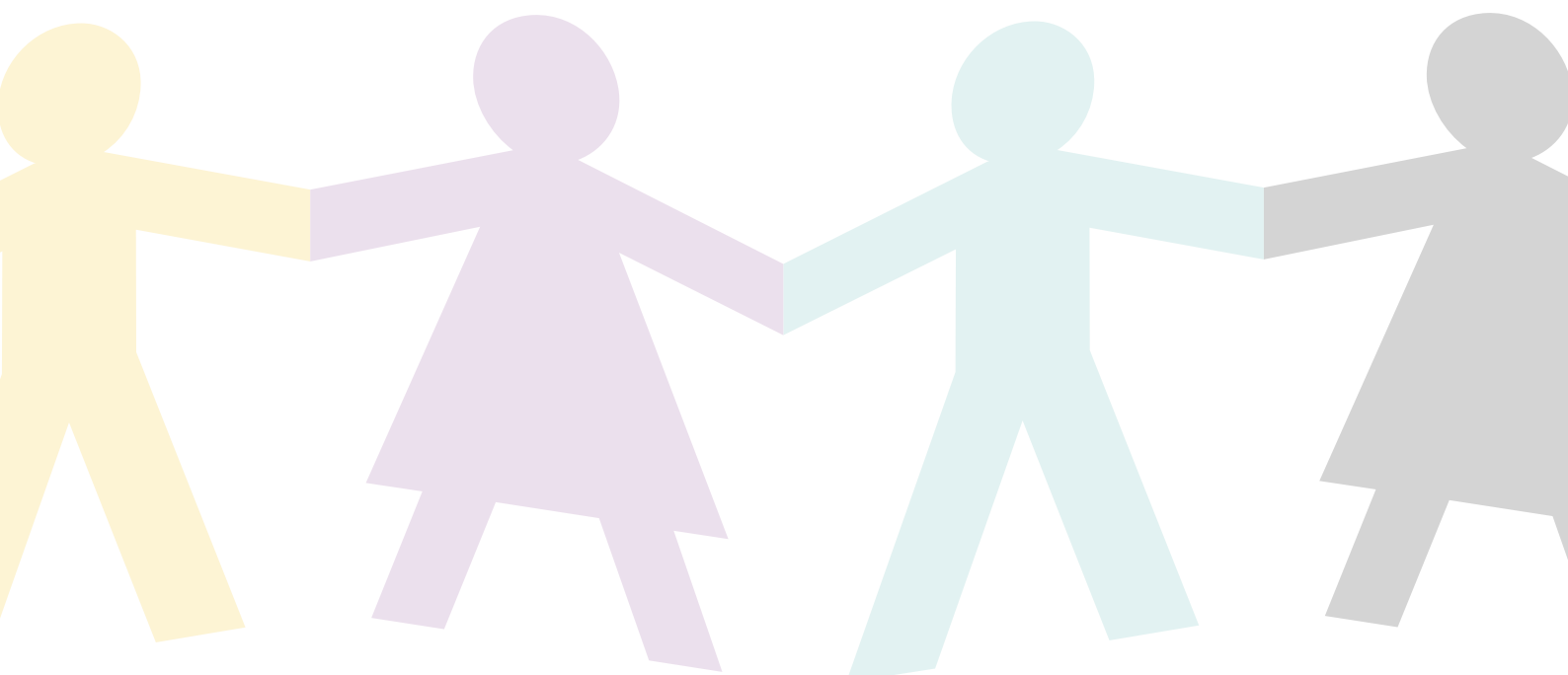
# 4.

**How will the overarching domestic abuse strategy be delivered?**





- Annual delivery plans for the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy will be developed by the ODASB with support from newly established multi-agency groups
- The delivery plans will include key actions for each deliverable, timescales (i.e. short-term or longer-term), stakeholders involved, and monitoring and evaluation measures to monitor the impact of the strategy. See Appendix C for action plan template, and Section 5 for more information on monitoring and evaluation
- Separate annual delivery plans are being developed to support the implementation of the Oxfordshire Safe Accommodation Strategy



# 5.

**How will we know we are making a difference?**



ODASB, in partnership with the newly established Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Dashboard, will develop a performance framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The performance framework will include a range of measures (process, input, output and short-term and long-term outcomes).

Once baseline data has been collected in 2021/22, targets can be set for the subsequent years. These will evidence the progress being made to meet the four strategic priorities and needs of the domestic abuse population in Oxfordshire. We will develop short term and longer term goals linked to improving outcomes and delivering evidence based interventions. Some targets will be measured in contract delivery of commissioned services as set out in the future action plan.

These are proposed indicators but may be amended in response to changes in national and local priorities, and refined based on measurement parameters.

## Strategic Priority 1: Prevention



- Increase in awareness and response from cross-sector professionals, organisations and community around domestic abuse
- Increase in children and young people who have a deeper understanding of power and control around healthy relationships following training
- Increase in staff who report increased confidence in areas of their practice, improved communications and increased awareness as a result of training using longitudinal analysis (e.g. end of training and six month post training evaluations)

## Strategic Priority 2: Provision



- Increase in victims-survivors, including children and young people, who are safer and better resourced to remain safe
- Increase in victims-survivors, including children and young people, who have improved physical, emotional and mental health and resources to maintain it
- Increase in victims-survivors, including children and young people, who have increased financial stability, independence, access to education and employment
- Increase in victims-survivors, including children and young people, who have hope and goals for the future
- Increase in equity of access and outcomes for people with protected characteristics affected by domestic abuse
- Reduction in repeat victimisation

## Strategic Priority 3: Pursuing



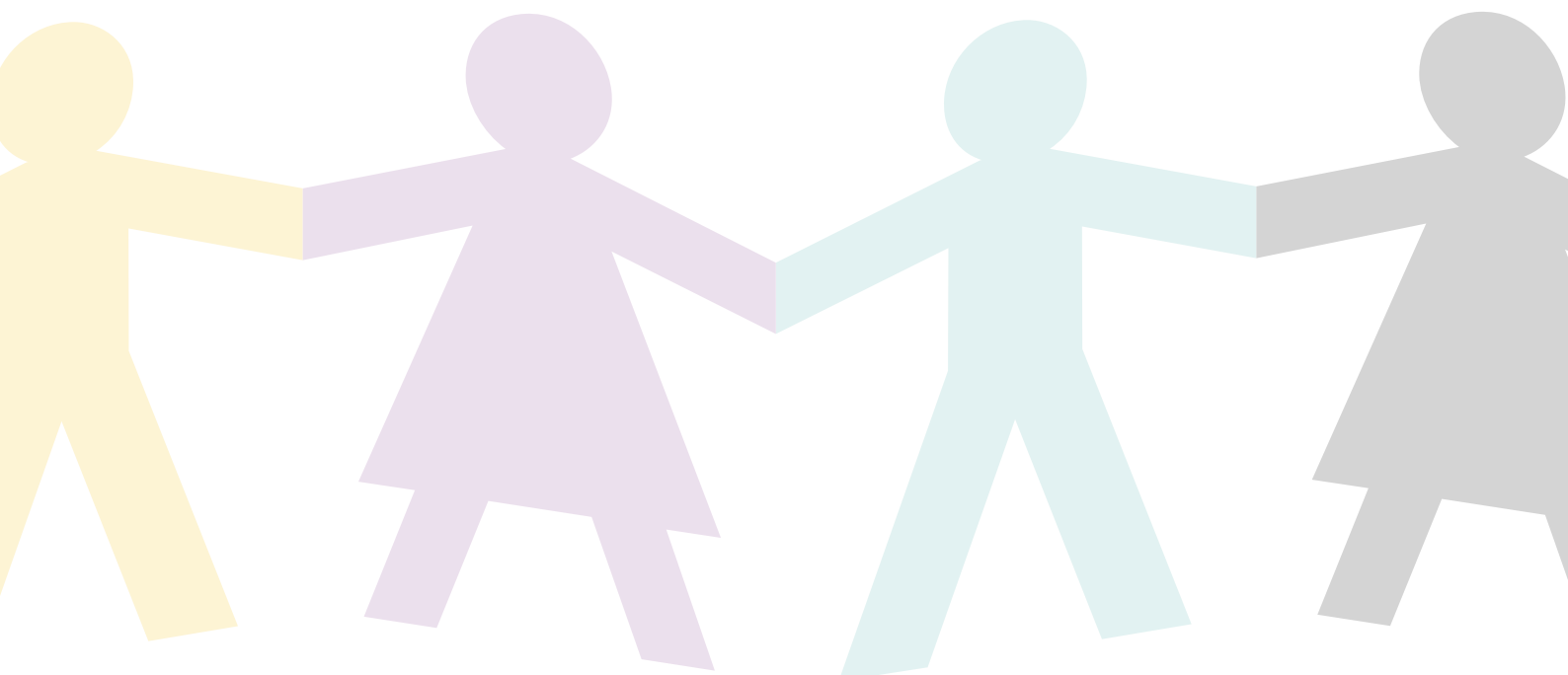
- Reduction in perpetrators re-offending after completing a perpetrator programme (short and long term follow up)
- Reduction in young people using abusive behaviours in relationships
- Increase in victims-survivors, including children and young people, parents, families and community members who report feeling safer
- Increase in domestic abuse victims who report feeling supported through the criminal justice process

## Strategic Priority 4: Partnership



- Increasing awareness of domestic abuse across all partners, demonstrated by inclusion in their strategies, policies and action plans
- Increase in co-production with victim-survivors in strategic developments and planning, and development of policies and procedures. Engagement from survivors reflects diversity of protected characteristics in Oxfordshire

Please see the Oxfordshire [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#) for information on measures relevant to safe accommodation in Oxfordshire.



# Acknowledgements

This strategy has been led by the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health Team and produced by Public Health Action Support Team (PHAST) with input from the following collaborators:

Victim-survivors who shared their experiences

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## **Members of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board:**

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Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Local Medical Committee

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Cherwell District Council

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National Probation Service

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Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

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Oxford City Council

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Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

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Oxford University Hospitals

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Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

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Oxfordshire County Council

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South Oxfordshire District Council

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Specialist providers from the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (OxDAP)

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Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board

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Thames Valley Police

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Vale of the White Horse District Council

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West Oxfordshire District Council

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# Appendix A: Definition of domestic abuse from the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021<sup>46</sup>

## Section 1: Definition of “domestic abuse”

(1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and

(b) the behaviour is abusive.

(3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—

(a) physical or sexual abuse;

(b) violent or threatening behaviour;

(c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

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

(4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to —

(a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or

(b) obtain goods or services.

(5) For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

(6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

(7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

## Section 2: Definition of “personally connected”

(1) Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies —

(a) they are, or have been, married to each other;

(b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;

(c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);

(d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);

(e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;

(f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));

(g) they are relatives.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if —

(a) the person is a parent of the child, or

(b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

46. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Statutory guidance: Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services. Published 1 October 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services>

(3) In this section –

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989;

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

### **Section 3: Children as victims of domestic abuse**

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who –

(a) sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse, and

(b) is related to A or B.

(3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if –

(a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or

(b) the child and the person are relatives.

(4) In this section –

“child” means person under the age of 18 years;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

# Appendix B: Supporting all victims<sup>47</sup>

The Act states that victims with each relevant protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010 must be able to access the support that they need. Under this duty, they expect authorities to ensure sufficient appropriate support is available within relevant safe accommodation to meet the needs of all victims including those with relevant protected characteristics, additional and / or multiple complex needs, or whose support needs cannot be properly met within non-specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation, such as:

- Black Asian and Minority Ethnic victims (Including Gypsy Roma and Traveller)
- Male victims
- Female victims
- Transgender and Non-Binary victims
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual victims, and others who may face barriers as a result of their sexuality
- Disabled victims – includes but is not limited to victims who are deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, autistic, wheelchair users, those with learning difficulties, as well as those with age-related disabilities
- Young (aged 16-18 – including care leavers) and older victims (over 65)
- Victims with an offending history
- Victims presenting with complex needs including those with mental health and/or drug and alcohol use support needs
- Victims with histories of sleeping rough
- Victims with histories of offending
- Victims facing multiple forms of abuse within the family such as honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Victims from a particular religion and/or with a spiritual belief, particularly if facing barriers to support as a result
- Migrant victims, including victims having insecure immigration status
- Victims from isolated and/or marginalised communities, including where there is limited English proficiency.
- Victims who have no choice but to move away from their local areas, communities, and friends to escape their perpetrator to stay safe and receive the support they need.
- Children of victims (including adolescent male children) who need to move with their parent into relevant safe accommodation.
- Victims accompanied by children, including large families and those with older adolescence boys (12+)
- Pregnant victims

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47. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Statutory guidance: Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services. Published 1 October 2021. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services)



# Appendix C: SAFE!

## Oxfordshire County Council Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy Young People's Consultation Event 12 April 2022



### Introduction

SAFE! was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to run a one-off focus group event with young people who have experienced domestic abuse and who have been in contact with SAFE! We invited over 15 young people to take part in the day, and after a few dropped out we were pleased to have 11 young people attend. They came from all around the county – Abingdon, Didcot, Banbury, Witney, Burford, Bicester. There were 2 males, 7 females and 2 non-binary children. They ranged in age from 11 to 16. We had four children in year 7, two in year 8, three in year 10 and two in year 11.

During the consultation following a few 'getting to know you' games, we introduced the purpose of the consultation and went through the priority areas as detailed in the consultation document agreed in advance. We invited the children to take part in a discussion, but we also handed out post-it notes and pens and asked them to write answers if they didn't feel comfortable speaking aloud. All of the children engaged well in the consultation, feeling able to share their personal experiences, and being supportive of each other. Most of the children felt able to speak and share their thoughts with others. There were some children who were quieter than others, but they wrote lots on their post-its.

In the following document, we have tried to record everything that was said, using the children's words as much as possible. We spent longer on some questions than others, and the conversation flowed quite naturally. As a result there are some sections with more responses around more than the original question. These have been left in the sections where they were discussed. We have also included everything that was written on the post-it notes.

### 1. What does the term domestic abuse mean to you?

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- Once I had done the DAY programme I realised how much is included in the term domestic abuse.
- Domestic means in the home
- Domestic abuse isn't just violence
- Domestic abuse means like when you are abused or hurt for no reason, or just for other people's enjoyment. In the home abuse.
- When you don't get treated right. Or when it is in the home.
- It turns a home into a house, like there's not the safe space there used to be.
- Mental or physical abuse at home.
- When someone who is either physically or shouting at you in the home
- Its traumatic, controlling. It's stuck in your head and once it is there it's hard to get rid of.
- Where you're hurting someone physically and mentally

#### OCC want your views on:

- the information / education we should be giving to CYP about DA / healthy relationships. We think this could include:

- what DA is / signs of DA / types of abuse used (e.g. how to know if you or someone you know is experiencing DA)
- what a healthy relationship looks like
- local support services and how to use them (e.g. where you can get help if you or someone you know is experiencing DA)

- where young people who are using abuse in relationships can get support
- problematic views (e.g. on gender roles, victim blaming)

## 2. Is that the right information to give young people? Is there anything missing?

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- Children and young people need to get advice on situation they are in. What to do, how to help and get out of it.
- You need to give examples of a healthy relationship alongside an abusive one so that you can see the good and bad behaviours.
- Introduce them to ways they can help themselves, signs, what will happen.
- Adding signs of domestic abuse as it might not be physical and more difficult to spot.
- Maybe give you signs of domestic abuse

## 3. What type of healthy relationship education do you remember having received? In school? Outside of school? What was good / bad about it?

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- Lots of the children couldn't initially remember having had any relationship education.
- We do some in tutor time at school, sometime talk in pairs. School allows us to leave the classroom if we need.
- We did some at school with a normal teacher
- In PSHE
- What does healthy relationship education mean?
- I have learnt from my own experience
- Have done some learning with the DAY programme and with SAFE!
- Learnt something in therapy
- Learning in general about the topic at school means that you can help other people who are going through it.
- Sometimes things are missed. Might miss out the priorities of relationships

- We did personal development as a subject but missed loads because of Covid. PSHE seems to mostly cover careers and when we did relationships nobody took it seriously.
- I have done some in youth groups learning about healthy relationships
- I did some work with early help/family work
- I had a phone call session with CAMHS about healthy relationships but it wasn't very helpful.
- DAY programme was after school on a Wednesday which was at the same time I wanted to be outside with my mates so sometimes didn't want to be there. But once I was there it was ok. It might be better to do it at a different time.
- I learnt that there were so many behaviours that were included in abuse
- We do PSHE in school but I haven't done anything outside of school
- In school we did personal development, and covered healthy/unhealthy relationships, but nobody took it seriously.
- In DAY programme I learnt that there's more to abuse than what most people think.

## 4. What do you think should be included in healthy relationship education?

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- More subtle ways that abuse starts
- The language that abusers use
- All the different signs, not just the bigger ones that are easier to spot, but the smaller ones too.
- When it is emotional abuse, it is hard to tell.
- We get taught about physical abuse but don't talk about the mental abuse.
- Different types of relationships should be included. Need to have more than one type of relationship as an example.
- There are more ways that abuse starts. Use definitions and ways that young kids can understand.
- Not just 'abuse' into the subject of domestic abuse.
- Happiness, being helpful and kind

## 5. How should domestic abuse awareness / healthy relationship education be delivered? What should we not do?

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- Do more in school time
- Zoom is not ideal. It would be better to be in person. You learn from the other people's perspectives.
- I learnt a lot from meeting someone in person, it helped a lot.
- On zoom you might not know what is going on in people's homes while they are in a session with you.
- For me zoom worked better as I don't like meeting in person, I have social anxiety
- Zoom is hard to trust
- Some people are more comfortable behind the screen because of social anxiety but for others they are better face to face.
- It should be delivered – agreed at an appropriate time, say stuff that is appropriate to the situation that they're in.

## 6. Is it better when this education is delivered by your normal teachers or by others?

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- Sometimes teachers should have to talk about it, as it might be different, and it is important for everyone to know.
- But it is better to have it delivered by someone who is trained and able to support you afterwards
- Teachers are there to 'tell' you about stuff but they won't know how to help you with this
- Teachers cannot and will not help you if you are a person of colour because they will pin it on your 'culture' or background. And they don't want to know or understand. So it is a massive struggle as they put it down to your ethnicity.
- Teachers should not override what is being said to them. I have seen people having their views put down.
- With teachers it seems like they are reading off a leaflet or off the internet. They don't know much about the subject.

## 7. Where do you think education on healthy relationships should happen? (e.g. school, youth groups, faith groups, YOT, PRU, accommodation services etc.)

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- We should be having this education both outside and inside school, and learn from different people. It is best to learn from different directions
- There should be more education for adults as well. You could still be an adult stuck in a relationship and have no education about how to get out of it.
- I think it should happen at school and outside of school for extra education, or in school about everyone, and at home about what you're going through

## 8. What language / methods should we use / not use when we are giving information / education?

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- Make sure you define abuse – don't just pin it down to physical. It can be generalised. Be sure to include ALL types of abuse.
- Smaller groups work better in school. If you are learning it in school and realise that it is something that is happening to you, you will not be willing to talk about it but in a smaller group you might feel more comfortable.
- I think it should be in single sex groups
- I don't think it matters if it is mixed genders, we should all be able to talk about it with everyone.
- In a whole class there is always someone messing around and making jokes because they don't understand it. That is why it is better delivered in smaller groups.
- We had a counsellor coming into school to talk about abuse in classes and in assembly. It was sort of helpful.
- It is ok to do assemblies but then you need to have a smaller group session. You can spot the signs more easily, it is then easier to talk to them in private.
- I feel like assemblies don't work as well. There will be people disrupting and distracting the other children. When there are people not listening at all, they don't learn anything.

- You can feel judged by older kids.
- You miss out quite a lot of people with assembly. I have such high social anxiety that I don't ever attend assembly. There are so many others like me, so you will miss out a lot of the young people who might not.
- Drop down hour, might learn about social education but I am not full-time in school so never get to do these things.
- There are so many young people who are not fully in school, doing on-line learning or have social anxiety so on a reduced timetable – and we all miss all of these things.
- 
- When you have a full day of workshops back to back, it is hard to process.
- They should define more about the word abuse. It should be delivered in smaller groups – people will have more confidence in smaller groups.

### **9. When professionals talk about relationships are they using words that young people use? Would it be helpful for professionals to use the language that young people use?**

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- Sometimes it can be confusing when you use words that are not really specific. I am autistic and I find it hard to understand without tone.
- You need to speak in a way that young people are going to understand. Most people are not going to know everything.
- There are some really old-fashioned words but they have a different meaning now.
- Words change for different generations
- Adults need to be careful in adapting their language as they might end up saying things that mean something else.
- I didn't realise I had a history of domestic abuse until years later when I realised that something that someone else was experiencing was awfully similar to what I had experienced.
- I didn't understand anything that was going on for me because I had only been taught about

abuse as something physical. I didn't pay attention to the little things. It took me years to get out of a bad relationship. I got into the relationship when I was 13 and only got out of it recently. I wish I had been taught stuff when I was younger.

- Domestic abuse implies two married people. You cannot relate to that as a young person.
- Domestic abuse makes you think of two people fighting
- There should be education available to adults too, as my mum also didn't realise that he was abusive until he actually hit her, she didn't know what it would be.
- Could we just outright call it abuse? Domestic abuse feels like a subcategory.
- A lot of people downplay domestic abuse. They say 'oh it happened to you but oh you're fine now'.
- When it all started in year 7 for me, everyone around me thought it was all in my mind. They thought I was making it up. It took two years for people to realise that it wasn't made up.
- The person (abuser) in my family was so nice to everyone else so no one knew what was happening.
- It's normalisation - calling arguments a 'domestic' makes you think that it is something normal.
- They should use words appropriate to the age of the child or words that are more specific. It will help them understand what everything means.

### **10. Do you know about any local services to support people affected by domestic abuse?**

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- Childline
- My Mum didn't have anywhere to go and then she contacted social care, we were offered a refuge but with me and my sister in a separate place from my mum. There was no way she was going to leave her children in another place after everything that had happened. So we went to nans and all had to live in a small space.

- We lived next door to our abuser so there was no escape. We had to live in a two bed bungalow with mum, nan, grandad and all the kids.
- You can call the police
- The police don't do much. In our experience they didn't help. They couldn't do anything about him.
- In my situation the police really helped. They came to the house straight away and took him away and came back to support my mum and me.
- The partner used to come to our house and damage our car and try to get in. The police have come and questioned me and my mum but then nothing has ever happened to him.
- It feels like you are being pushed under the rug. Because you are young you are not taken seriously. It didn't click until went into secondary. When it all went down, we all shut ourselves off, the whole family. I used to go to a youth club and the police came in regularly, while it was all going on at home, but they never asked me if I needed help.
- Police need to listen to younger voices. I witnessed everything that happened between my parents but they didn't take my statement. They didn't talk to me or my siblings. I was ten years old. I didn't understand why I couldn't help my Mum because I had seen everything. They said I could have been manipulated by one parent.
- The police also said that about me. I was 12 or 11 and my sister was 21, and if it wasn't for my brother.... Dad threatened to knock out everyone in the house. My brother protected us all. That was our normal reality, our day to day.
- I agree, when the police got involved. I saw everything and I was told that I couldn't do anything. I was in my room the whole time and I heard and knew about everything.
- Police said I was too young to have witnessed everything. They turned it onto my parents to say that it was their fault for not protecting me.

- I had CAMHS sessions and am now doing SAFE! and I know the school will help and there's lots of people I can go to.

### **11. Where can you get help if you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse?**

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- You can tell them who to go to like Childline, CAMHS, SAFE!

### **12. What would help Children and Young People feel safer to speak to a professional about their experiences of domestic abuse.**

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- One to one talking. Not talking in front of parents.
- Not writing stuff down when you are having a one on one talk. Write it afterwards but not at the time. Sometimes they say it is because they need to pass it on. But surely if it was that bad they would remember it. It is really off-putting if people are writing it down.
- 121, people would be more confident and people are more likely to speak up when they're in a smaller group. It is off-putting when people type it up.

### **13. OCC are planning to create one website about domestic abuse for all residents, what do you think should be included for young people?**

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- Include a mini dictionary of terms for people to understand, not just children but people with learning difficulties too. Because sometimes they don't understand
- More education about different signs of abuse – that it is not just hitting people
- Make the website universal, for all ages, to make it inclusive.
- Include different types of relationships
- It needs to have advice on how to deal with it.
- Use words everyone will understand.
- Education around the signs of abuse/ clarification.

#### **14. Where do you find out information? (e.g. social media, school, friends, parents, TV, faith organisations, youth groups, professionals, Google search etc.)**

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- Google
- I would ask people – my Mum
- Depends what you looking for
- I look at the NHS website – they have good information about mental health and mental disorders.
- I would always talk to my mum first
- Social media – we use snapchat, Instagram, twitter, tiktok
- You can find helplines on social media
- I was advised to use an app called ‘Mee too’. It is where young people can post anonymously about their issues and they give each other advice. It is a source of information but also comments, from other young people. You can help others but you can also get help.
- You can find medical professionals on social media and that can help
- For information I look on the internet on websites, like NHS. Also I will talk to it with the people I trust.

#### **15. Who did you feel able to talk about your experiences with?**

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- SAFE! and young carers I can talk to my nan. She will always encourage me to talk to her about things and to tell her my worries
- I talk to my mum and if she isn't around my aunt.
- I can talk to my cousin and I can tell her anything.
- People at school tend to interfere with things that they shouldn't. I have had teachers make me feel guilty about the situation that I am in. Sometimes they don't want to see anything about people's lives when it isn't sunshine and roses.
- I feel able to talk to CAMHS and SAFE! and talk to family and people I trust to help me with my experiences.

- My partner, because we share some experiences and can help each other to a certain degree. We support each other

#### **16. Where did you get help? What was most helpful? What could they have done better?**

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- CAMHS – helped with my ADHD but trauma wise they didn't help at all. Some of the medication was ok.
- CAMHS for me were rubbish, they have been involved for years but I have only just got onto medication. It wasn't even CAMHS that put me on medication it was my psychiatrist.
- I am now being supported by a department of CAMHS, (it starts with an H?) which is for autism and that is helping.
- Young carers helped – we did some creative activities.
- Before I started with SAFE! I had nothing. I was constantly in bad situations. I was in a bad place. I would get help every so often, but then go back into a bad place. With SAFE! it really helped me to get out of the hard place and in the clear.
- It's been 4 years since my mum got out of the relationships and we had no support back then. But now both me and my mum are getting some help all these years later. I wish we had got some help sooner.
- Most helpful was SAFE!, it helped me know what to do. CAMHS has also helped with looking after my mental health.

#### **17. Did you speak to professionals? Non-professionals? Such as family and friends. What could they have done better? Differently?**

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- I didn't really speak to anyone. I just realised one day and I tried to ignore it.
- I told my mum first before I talked to any professionals. It helped me to tell my mum how I was feeling first before I talked to a professional.

- I spoke to professionals and they really helped. They looked after and encouraged me.

### **18. What did you need the most from services? Did you get it?**

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- I needed help and support. I didn't get it at the time that I needed it the most, but I got it after.
- My mum went on lots of support courses but then I was not even thought of for years. I am only now beginning to get support.
- For me, I got lots of support initially but my Mum didn't. There are still lots of things that she needs to deal with.
- I have been self-dependent for the entirety of the 6 years that this has been happening. It would be good to have someone there to just listen no matter how old you are.
- We had an early help worker – the most she did was have us filling in a workbook and it was no help at all.
- They are just getting you to write in a booklet, it is not helpful. Sometimes you have no motivation to do anything at all. Writing in a booklet is not going to help
- I did get what I needed to have from services but I should have had help earlier.

### **19. What went well when you used a service/s?**

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- It helped me get out of depression
- It helped me realise I was going through a depressive episode
- It helped me realise how to get out of the situation

### **20. What could services have done or do better?**

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- They could have dug deeper. They could have helped to realise what had been happening.
- They need to delve into symptoms more – I had not realised that I had PTSD until my mum realised what was happening. Services need to

pay more attention to me. My sister took years to get diagnosis of ADHD even though it had been happening for years.

- They should have provided help earlier. It was long after the situation had calmed down that I got help.

### **21. Do we need more services for CYP? If so, what are they? Do we need different services for CYP? If so, what are they?**

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- Anything that would take in young children witness statements. Situations could be more easily resolved.
- We don't need more services but I want current services to accept what everyone has to say about what is happening to them.

### **22. What support/services do you think a CYP who is displaying abusive behaviour needs?**

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- They need to be taught and shown how harmful the behaviour is and how it will progress and get worse. More education. Understanding how the behaviour could evolve.
- Depends what the person is doing – better drug and alcohol services for young people.
- They should be taught and see how their behaviour could escalate and that it's not normal.

### **23. Is there anything else you would like to share about domestic abuse, your experiences or on services that you have accessed?**

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- All children were told they couldn't attend court because they were underage.
- I know that court is happening but I don't think I am allowed to go

Following the consultation we took the children to have lunch at Pizza Pilgrims, and then to play crazy golf at JunkYard Golf. Before being collected at the end of the day, we asked each child to complete an online anonymous questionnaire to feedback on the day. See these results below:

### **What did you like about the consultation event today?**

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1. Making friends, socialising
2. It was fun and educational
3. The pizza
4. Meet new people
5. That it was an open discussion that we could all contribute to
6. Everything
7. Making new friends
8. Golf
9. I found it fun talking to over people who had the same problems as me and the pizza and golf was fun
10. Meeting Sienna
11. Learning how everyone is in the same vote and that your not allowed

### **What could we do better?**

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1. Nothing
2. I think everything was just perfect to be honest
3. Not sure
4. Don't know
5. I can't really think of anything off of the top of my head
6. Not as much questions
7. Nothing
8. Pizza
9. I don't think there was really anything you could do better it was overall a well planned day.
10. No I had a really good day
11. No

### **What are the best ways to get children and young people's views about domestic abuse services? How would you like to give your views?**

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1. Advertise it, events like today
2. This is definitely one of the best ways in my opinion
3. To go to school
4. Don't know
5. Hold more meetings like this or do workshops with groups of people in school
6. Not sure
7. Online
8. Face to face
9. I would put up a form online that anyone can complete and they would go through to help lines.
10. Face to face
11. That they need to look more into it as it is all in the house and not outside the home

### **What other topics should we get children and young people's views on?**

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1. Self harm, suicide
2. I don't really know
3. Abusive language
4. Don't know
5. Things like racism and sexism, and topics that are prominent in school, like bullying
6. Mental health /more of
7. I don't know
8. No idea
9. We should also get young people s views on how things make them feel, like getting young peoples voices heard
10. Emotional and mental abuse
11. How to help with mental health and how they could live with it and know it is not there fault



**Would you like to know how OCC used your views collected in the consultation today?  
How would you like to be kept informed?**

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1. Yes Kristie contact mum
2. Nah I don't really care what the OCC think to be honest
3. No
4. Don't know
5. Through email
6. No thank you
7. Yes
8. I don't know
9. No you explained it well during today's meet up.
10. Yes
11. No

**Would you like to be involved in future consultation events for OCC?**

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1. Yes
2. Yes
3. No
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. No
7. Yes
8. Yes
9. No
10. Yes
11. No

# Appendix D: Action plan template

STRATEGIC PRIORITY NUMBER	ACTION	LOCAL LEAD (L) & STAKEHOLDERS	ACTION TAKEN (DELIVERABLES OR WORK PLAN)	IMPACT MEASUREMENT	ACTION MET? (FULLY MET, PARTIALLY MET, NOT MET)	ACTION REQUIRED	DEADLINE FOR ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Prevention</b> 							
<b>Provision</b> 							
<b>Pursuing</b> 							
<b>Partnership</b> 							

# How to access support now

This strategy document is about how we want to develop and improve our services over the next 3 years.

If you need support now, this can be accessed by calling the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) on 0800 731 0055 or visiting [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse)

Alternatively, you can contact the freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247.

**If you are in immediate danger, please do not be afraid to call 999.**

Alternatively, you can contact Thames Valley Police on the non-emergency telephone number 101 or visit your local police station to speak with an officer in confidence.



Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse  
Strategic Board



## **Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 – 2025**

Oxfordshire County Council Public Health Team  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

July 2022