

Barnsley Domestic Abuse, Sexual Harm and **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)** Strategy 2026 - 2029



When you're ready,
we're here.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Barnsley Domestic Abuse, Sexual Harm and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2026–2029.

This strategy sets out Barnsley’s long-term approach to preventing domestic abuse, sexual harm, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). It also strengthens early intervention and aims to improve outcomes for survivors. It will be reviewed in 2028 to make sure our priorities remain responsive to local need and emerging evidence.

The national VAWG framework focuses on women and girls because they are most affected by this type of violence. Barnsley recognises that boys and men can also be victims of sexual harm, exploitation, and gender-based violence. Our approach is inclusive and makes sure support for all victims and survivors is available, regardless of gender.

This strategy was developed with partners across Barnsley. It recognises that no single organisation can address domestic abuse alone. A coordinated, whole system response is essential. Every agency has a shared responsibility to act early, identify concerns, and provide effective support. This includes supporting children and young people as victims in their own right. Agencies must also hold people who perpetrate abuse to account.

Domestic abuse and sexual harm remain significant issues both nationally and locally. They have a deep and often long-lasting impact on the safety, health, and wellbeing of people, families, and communities.

Domestic abuse is a major factor in homelessness, a key driver of referrals to statutory services, and a frequent cause of police involvement and criminal justice intervention. When support is not timely or effective, domestic abuse and sexual harm can lead to very serious and tragic outcomes, including homicide and suicide.

Sexual harm and sexual violence have equally profound and enduring consequences. They can cause significant physical injury, emotional and psychological trauma, and long-term disruption to safety, relationships, education, employment, and overall wellbeing.

Survivors often need specialist, trauma-informed support to rebuild their lives and to reduce the risk of further harm.

Barnsley’s vision is clear. Domestic abuse and sexual harm will never be tolerated, and the voices of survivors, including children and young people, will be seen, heard, believed, and supported in their own right.

This strategy sets out how we will achieve that vision through prevention, early intervention, survivor led services, and strong accountability for perpetrators.



What is domestic abuse, sexual harm and VAWG?



What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is when someone aged 16 or over uses controlling, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour towards someone they are personally connected to.

It can include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or economic abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship. This includes partners or ex-partners, family members and people who live in the same home.

It can affect anyone, whatever their age, gender or background, and can have a serious and long-lasting impact on individuals, children and families.

What is sexual harm or sexual violence?

Sexual harm is any sexual activity, behaviour or contact that happens without consent, or when someone is not able to give consent.

It can include:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Sexual touching without consent
- Sexual exploitation
- Being pressured, manipulated or forced into sexual activity
- Sharing or threatening to share sexual images without permission
- Sexual harassment or unwanted sexual behaviour

Sexual violence can be carried out by partners, ex-partners, family members, acquaintances or strangers.

It is a form of trauma that can cause emotional, physical and psychological harm. People often need specialist, trauma-informed support to recover.

What is Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a range of harmful behaviours carried out towards women and girls because of their gender.

It can include:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence
- Stalking
- Harassment
- Physical, emotional or psychological harm

VAWG is linked to power imbalances and harmful attitudes in society. It can be carried out by partners, family members, acquaintances or strangers.



Previous strategy and progress



Barnsley's previous domestic abuse strategy set out a clear framework for tackling abuse across the borough.

It focused on preventing abuse, supporting victims, and making sure perpetrators were held to account. The approach encouraged organisations to work together, act early, and listen to the voices of survivors when shaping services.

Since the strategy began, several important improvements have been made, including:

- **Expanded safe accommodation provision,** improving commissioning or contract management and strengthening consistency and safety for survivors.
- **Expanded the Sanctuary Scheme,** increasing options for victims or survivors to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate.
- **Recommissioned domestic abuse services,** integrating support for children and young people into a more joined up model to improve coordination and outcomes.
- **Strengthened early intervention and prevention by** commissioning youth focused programmes that promote healthy relationships and help prevent abuse before it occurs.

- **Established specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) posts** within Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) increasing capacity and improving access to independent advocacy for higher-risk victims or survivors.
- **Implemented ‘Ask the Question’ Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Counselling Service (BSARCS)**, a trauma-informed approach supporting professionals to routinely and compassionately enquire about sexual harm, building confidence and embedding routine enquiry across mainstream services.
- **Expanded post crisis recovery support for women** through GROW’s Hear Her Voice service, providing trauma-informed one-to-one support, structured group work and peer-led activities to improve wellbeing, amplify survivor voice and support long-term recovery.
- **Introduced targeted work with people using harmful behaviours**, including the Level Up pilot perpetrator programme for young people to support earlier accountability and behaviour change.
- **Strengthened regional perpetrator collaboration** through the South Yorkshire partnership recommissioning a behaviour change programme; Inspire to Change addresses harmful behaviours to improve safety for victims and families.
- **Delivered training and workforce development through Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS)**, improving professional knowledge, confidence and consistency in responding to domestic abuse across partner agencies.
- **Embedded the Safe & Together Model**, which is training for children’s social workers focusing on keeping children safely with the non-abusing parent while holding perpetrators to account.
- **Enhanced responses to high-risk cases through a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) review**, strengthening oversight, improving management of repeat cases, and aligning more closely with safeguarding arrangements.
- **Commenced a multi-agency domestic abuse (MADA) meeting pilot** in children’s services to strengthen information sharing, coordination and risk management.
- **Implemented Operation Encompass in all Barnsley schools**, enabling next school day notifications when police are called to a domestic abuse incident.



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Over the past three years, Barnsley has made significant progress in strengthening its local response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), building on a clear partnership commitment to prevention, early intervention and safer communities.

Key achievements include:

- Securing White Ribbon Accreditation.
- Demonstrating a borough-wide commitment to challenging male violence against women and girls.
- Establishing a Safe Space offer to provide visible reassurance and support within the evening and night-time economy.
- Refreshing the Ask for Angela scheme across Barnsley to improve awareness and help people discreetly seek support when they feel unsafe.



Barnsley's

vision statement



This vision was developed with victims, survivors and key partners.

It reflects real experiences and the courage of those who shared them. Based on lived experience and shared commitment, it aims to create positive change, strengthen support, and help build safer, more caring communities where people feel heard and supported.

“Barnsley Stands Together: No Tolerance, Every Voice Heard.”

In Barnsley domestic abuse and sexual harm is never tolerated, survivors including children and young people are listened to, believed, and supported.

We recognise the courage it takes to speak up and work together as an open and accountable community, learning from lived experience to shape services that are clear, accessible, and rooted in real life.

We are committed to early intervention and visible routes to support adults and children, as well as holding people who cause harm responsible for their actions.

We will challenge harmful attitudes and stereotypes, promote understanding of abuse including coercive control and use education and community influence to help prevent harm before it escalates.

Barnsley will stand together so that everyone can live free from harm, feel safe, and have the opportunity to thrive.

Strategic aims



Tackle violence, exploitation, and harm

Create safer communities for women and girls by preventing violence and abuse, challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours and strengthening responses to exploitation and emerging harms.

Improve safety, support and recovery for victims and survivors

Make sure victims and survivors can access the right support, including safe accommodation and trauma-informed services.

Making sure survivors' experiences shape decisions at every level

Makes sure the voices and experiences of survivors shape decisions, services and how support is designed, delivered and improved.

Hold perpetrators to account

Challenge harmful behaviour through consistent action, behaviour change support and joined up case management.

Prevent abuse

Stop abuse before it starts through education, early help and by challenging harmful attitudes, to address root causes and build safer communities.

Working as one system to deliver better outcomes

Strengthen partnership working, information sharing and shared standards across all services.

Develop a skilled and confident workforce

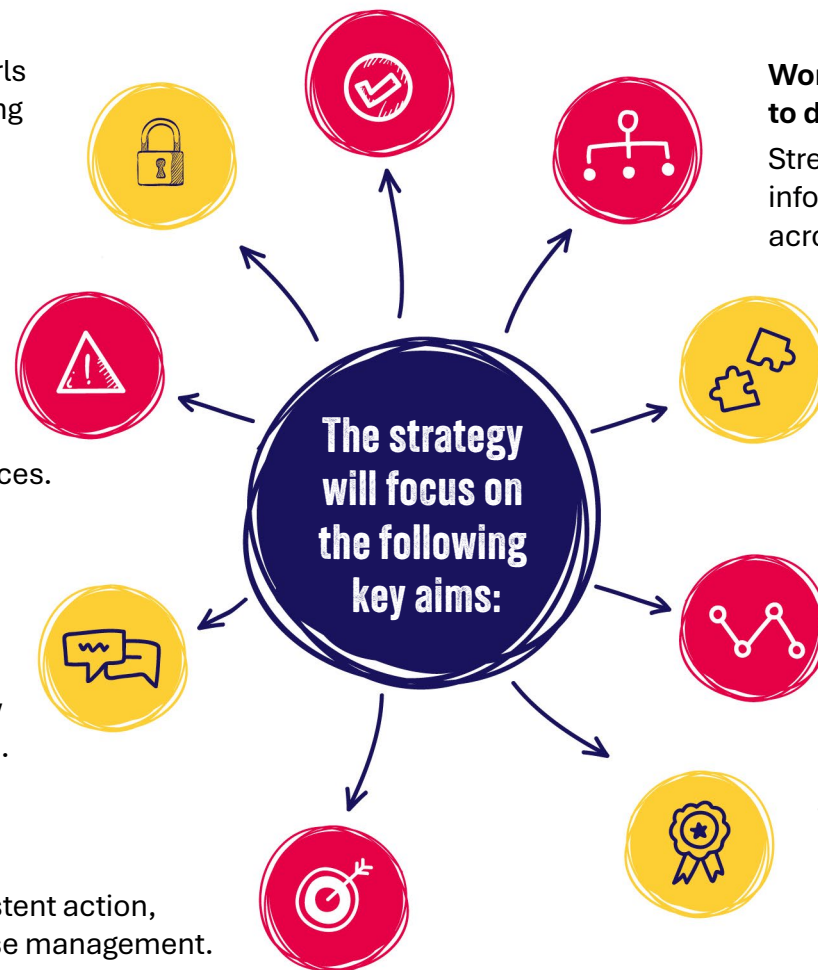
Support staff through joint training, shared ways of working and learning across organisations.

Data

Improve how data is collected and shared to help identify risk early, support decision making and monitor progress.

Strong governance

Provide clear leadership through the Domestic Abuse Partnership, with groups reporting on progress, risks and outcomes to support joined up action and accountability.



National context

Scale of the issue



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) affects at least **one in 12 women each year**, demonstrating the widespread and persistent nature of harm across society.

Over 3 million
people impacted
by domestic abuse

Domestic abuse impacts **1.6 million women** and **1.8 million children** annually, reflecting the significant number of families requiring support.

 **1 woman per week**

Over one woman per week is killed by a male partner or ex-partner, highlighting the severe and often fatal consequences of domestic abuse.

62% Demand for specialist support is rising, with a **62% increase in referrals** relating to technology facilitated abuse recorded in 2025.

Economic and social impact



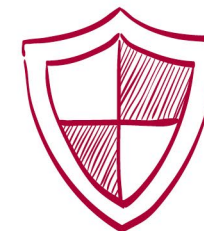
Half a billion
pounds

Government investment of more than half a billion pounds has been committed to expand safe accommodation and domestic abuse support.

This funding is expected to help nearly **140,000 people over three years**, including children.

Pressures on housing, online safety and the criminal justice system continue to increase risk.

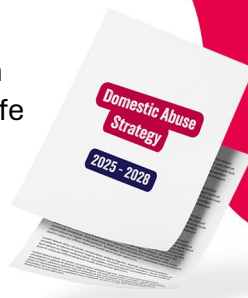
Review bodies have warned that services need to work more closely together to reduce duplication and make better use of resources.



Policy and legislative framework

Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places legal duties on local authorities to make sure people can access safe accommodation and specialist support.
- It also recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, not just as witnesses.
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents>



Download the strategy report here

National VAWG strategies and action plans:

- National strategies aim to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG), with a strong focus on prevention, early help and holding perpetrators to account.
- **The Freedom from Violence and Abuse** strategy sets out an ambition to halve VAWG within ten years.
- Specialist organisations have highlighted national priorities, including tackling technology facilitated abuse, improving police accountability, and addressing inequalities faced by Black, minoritised and migrant women.

Criminal justice system response:

- The CPS VAWG Strategy (2025–2030) calls for higher quality cases, improved trust for victims, and stronger responses to complex crimes.
- This includes offences linked to technology, such as cyberflashing and digital stalking.



Key national challenges

Online harms are increasing, and technology is being used more often to carry out abuse.



This means stronger rules and better national coordination are needed.



Increased risk for victims

Pressures on policing, courts and housing **increase risk for victims** and can delay access to justice and support.

Local context and needs assessment



Barnsley's approach is informed by the Barnsley Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment.

This focuses mainly on 2024/25 and includes analysis of recent trends. It brings together information from partners and services to understand local demand, who is most affected, and where services need to improve.

Key local messages from the needs assessment include:

- Domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Barnsley, with an estimated 14,000 plus adults affected annually, nearly 47,000 residents impacted over their lifetime, showing that demand remains high rather than falling.
- Partner abuse accounts for the majority of cases, while family related abuse is increasing, which requires tailored safeguarding and support approaches.
- Women are disproportionately affected, but men represent a substantial minority and remain underrepresented in services and access to accommodation.
- Criminal justice outcomes remain weak, with falling arrest rates and most cases resulting in no further action, often due to evidence issues and victim withdrawal.
- Multi-agency safeguarding responses are a strength (e.g. Integrated Front Door (IFD), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi Agency Domestic Abuse (MADA), but repeat cases remain above national averages, and repeat perpetration remains a concern. This reinforces the importance of perpetrator focused interventions. Referral quality and agency engagement are not consistent, and overall demand remains high (MARAC referrals 718 in 2024/25 vs 729 in 2023/24, with repeat cases often around 35%).
- Domestic abuse continues to affect housing stability, with rising housing approaches, high reliance on emergency accommodation, and limited options to move on to longer term housing; between April 2021 and March 2025, domestic abuse led to 218 households being owed a relief duty and 37 households being owed a prevention duty.



- Safe accommodation capacity is insufficient and does not fully meet national or European standards. Although there is planned or ongoing expansion of provision, the system remains unable to consistently meet demand—particularly for men, No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) victims, families with older children, and those with complex needs.
- There is evidence that domestic abuse is not always identified through some services, including adult safeguarding and health. In 2023/24, domestic abuse was recorded in 1.83% of concluded Section 42 enquiries.
- Children and young people are affected in large numbers but are not always identified through current services. Modelling suggests that around 18,420 children may be affected each year (2024/25).
- The Needs Assessment also highlights barriers to access and different experiences for some groups. This includes disabled survivors, LGBTQ+ people, and those facing barriers such as NRPF. This reinforces the need for tailored and accessible support.
- Health services play a critical role, particularly acute settings, but primary care data is limited, and domestic abuse is not consistently captured across mental health and substance misuse pathways.
- Rural and semi-rural areas show signs of under-reporting, with low service engagement despite estimated need, suggesting barriers linked to access and stigma.
- Perpetrator programmes demonstrate strong impact, including reduced reoffending and improved victim safety, but early engagement and continued attendance remain challenges.
- Data quality and fragmented systems remain a shared challenge, limiting insight into prevalence, inequality, repeat harm and system effectiveness.

Links to other strategies and safeguarding work

This strategy aligns with and complements wider safeguarding, community safety and health strategies, including work relating to child sexual exploitation. Delivery will be coordinated through existing safeguarding partnerships and governance arrangements to ensure joined up responses and avoid duplication.

Delivering our Violence Against Women and Girls ambition

Alongside our domestic abuse priorities, this strategy contributes to Barnsley's wider Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda. The VAWG Delivery Plan will focus on prevention and culture change, improving safety in public and online spaces, strengthening responses to exploitation and emerging harms, increasing community and organisational awareness, and ensuring services are connected, trauma-informed and responsive to the needs of all communities.

Governance and accountability



Effective delivery of this strategy will be supported by clear, transparent and accountable governance across the partnership. The Domestic Abuse Partnership will lead this work, coordinate activity, and ensure it links with wider community safety, safeguarding and health structures.

Thematic subgroups will cover perpetrators, children and young people, support services, data and performance, and lead delivery within their areas. Each group will develop, deliver, and monitor actions within the delivery plan, ensuring work is evidence based, joined up, and responsive to local need.

A dedicated survivor panel or lived experience group will provide ongoing challenge and insight, ensuring survivor voices shape decision making, service design, and service quality.

The governance arrangements, including the Survivor Forum and partnership reporting structures, will provide both insight and constructive challenge.

This will ensure partners are held to account for delivery, quality and impact, and that learning from lived experience, reviews and challenge activity directly informs service improvement and commissioning.

A monitoring framework with clear Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will support consistent reporting, identify risks, and a strong focus on outcomes. Subgroups will review performance regularly and report progress to the Domestic Abuse Partnership.

To maintain transparency and accountability, an annual progress report will be shared to the Safer Barnsley Partnership Board and other relevant governance bodies. The report will highlight achievements, areas for improvement, and priorities for the year ahead.

Governance and accountability



Joint working with:

Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board

Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Health and Wellbeing Board

Youth Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Board

Local Criminal Justice Board

Safer Barnsley Partnership Board

Statutory body via Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Partnership Assurance Group

Domestic Abuse Partnership



DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP

Prevention and early intervention

Prevention, Education and Awareness Sub-group

Children and young people

Children and Young People Focus Group

Support for victims and survivors

Commissioning Team, Safe Accommodation Group, Commissioning Task Groups

Survivor voice

Victim and Survivor Forum

Perpetrator accountability

Behaviour Change and Accountability Group

Violence against women and girls

Sexual Harm Sub-group

Strategic priorities

Sub-groups

Communication

Multi-agency co-ordination

Data and governance

Workforce development

MARAC / MADA / MATAC

Cross cutting enablers

Strategic priorities and actions



Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention

Aim:

Identify harm earlier, prevent abuse before it occurs, reduce repeat harm, challenge harmful attitudes, and address inequality, vulnerability and root causes before abuse becomes a regular pattern.

Key actions:

- **Enhancing early identification across services**
We will strengthen early identification across frontline services, making sure risk is recognised sooner, children's lived experience is understood, and people are supported before abuse escalates.
- **Targeted prevention based on local need and inequality**
We will focus our support on the people and communities who need it most. This includes areas where there is a higher risk of harm, communities that may be overlooked, and situations where abuse may be hidden. We will work to reduce the challenges that can make people more vulnerable.
- **Strengthening education and youth prevention**
We will strengthen education-based prevention by promoting healthy relationships, supporting high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) delivery, and equipping children, young people and parents with knowledge, skills and early help support.
- **Challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours (including early perpetration)**
We will develop and embed approaches that challenge harmful attitudes, misogyny and controlling behaviours, including early identification and intervention with those at risk of causing harm.

Strategic priorities and actions

Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention continued...

Key actions continued:

- **Promoting community awareness and whole society prevention**
We will help more people understand what abuse is, how to spot it, and where to get help. We will work with communities to raise awareness and make sure information is clear, accessible and relevant to people from different backgrounds.
- **Improving safety in public spaces**
We will work with partners and communities to improve the safety of public spaces through place-based approaches, awareness campaigns and action informed by local intelligence and lived experience.
- **Strengthening safety in online spaces**
We will strengthen awareness, prevention and responses to online abuse, harassment and exploitation, making sure women, girls, children and young people are supported to navigate digital spaces safely.
- **Building a trauma-informed and skilled preventative workforce**
We will strengthen workforce capability through training and trauma-informed practice to ensure consistent, informed and effective early responses across services.
- **Addressing online harm and digital risk**
We will strengthen understanding and prevention of online abuse, ensuring children and young people are supported to safely navigate digital spaces and professionals are equipped to identify and respond to online harm.
- **Using data, insight and intelligence to prevent harm**
We will use data and insight to identify risk earlier, target prevention activity, improve information sharing, and strengthen partnership responses.

Key outcomes:

- Risks of domestic abuse and VAWG are identified earlier, with timely access to coordinated support.
- Harmful attitudes, behaviours and early perpetration reduce through stronger prevention in schools, communities and digital spaces.
- Children and young people are better equipped to recognise and respond to unhealthy relationships and abuse.
- Partners intervene earlier and more consistently, using shared information, professional judgement and trauma-informed practice.
- Improved data and intelligence enable targeted prevention, reducing inequality and repeat harm.



Strategic priorities and actions

Priority two: Children and young people

Aim:

Make sure children and young people are safe, seen, heard and supported. We will identify concerns early, provide the right support, work closely with families, and join up with partner organisations to help protect children from abuse.

This priority contributes to Barnsley's wider Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda by addressing domestic abuse early in childhood, promoting healthy relationships and challenging harmful behaviours to prevent harm becoming a regular pattern.

Key actions:

- **Recognising children as victims in their own right**
We will ensure children experiencing domestic abuse are consistently recognised as victims in their own right, with their voice, lived experience and daily reality central to all assessment, planning and decision-making.
- **Strengthening early identification and intervention**
We will strengthen early identification across the life course, including unborn babies, early years and children living with ongoing or hidden harm, ensuring timely escalation, robust front door assessment and coordinated safeguarding responses.
- **Recognising cumulative harm and strengthening risk analysis**
We will strengthen multi-agency understanding of increased harm by improving analysis of repeat abuse, coercive control and family context, ensuring assessments reflect children's ongoing lived experience over time.
- **Embedding whole-family responses and perpetrator accountability**
We will embed a whole family approach that strengthens identification and management of perpetrator risk, reduces over-reliance on non-abusive parents, and makes sure perpetrator accountability is integral to safeguarding and planning.
- **Embedding trauma-informed, child-centred practice**
We will make sure all services adopt trauma-informed and child centred approaches, with plans that respond to children's emotional and psychological needs and are appropriate for their age.
- **Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding and shared decision-making**
We will strengthen partnership responses to make sure safeguarding is timely, coordinated and based on shared risk analysis, with consistent and high-quality contributions from all agencies.
- **Recognising non-engagement as a safeguarding risk**
We will make sure non-engagement is consistently recognised as a potential indicator of increased risk, triggering professional curiosity, escalation and coordinated multi-agency response where appropriate.



Strategic priorities and actions

Priority two: Children and young people continued...

Key actions continued:

- **Strengthening cross-border safeguarding**
We will improve information sharing and continuity of safeguarding for children and families who move across local authority boundaries, reducing delay and drift.

- **Strengthening education-based safeguarding and prevention**
We will strengthen safeguarding and prevention within education and early years settings, including effective use of Operation Encompass, improved visibility of vulnerable children, and whole-setting approaches to early help, safeguarding and prevention. We will contribute to the wider VAWG prevention agenda by promoting healthy relationships, challenging harmful attitudes and supporting children and young people to recognise abuse and access help early.

- **Making sure therapeutic and specialist support is available**
We will make sure children and young people affected by domestic abuse can access timely, specialist and trauma-

informed support that meets their emotional and age appropriate needs.

- **Meeting the needs of diverse and underserved children.** We will strengthen fair and inclusive responses by making sure services meet the needs of diverse and underserved children and young people, addressing inequality and improving access to support.
- **Improving outcomes within court processes.** We will strengthen child focused and trauma-informed practice within court pathways, making sure safeguarding information is clear, timely and centred on the child's voice and safety.
- **Strengthening workforce capability and learning.** We will build a skilled and confident workforce through multi-agency training, supervision and quality assurance, embedding learning from local and national reviews to improve practice.

Key outcomes:

- Children and young people are consistently recognised, seen and heard as victims in their own right.
- Risk is identified earlier, including for unborn babies and young children.
- Responses are timely, coordinated and based on shared multi-agency understanding of risk.
- Increased harm is recognised and addressed, reducing repeat and escalating abuse.
- Perpetrator risk is actively managed as part of safeguarding children.
- Children and families receive trauma-informed, fair and inclusive effective support.
- Children's safety and voice are consistently prioritised across safeguarding and court processes.
- Children are not only seen but protected through timely, decisive and effective safeguarding action.
- Children and young people are better equipped to recognise, challenge and prevent abusive behaviours, contributing to long-term reduction of VAWG.

Strategic priorities and actions

Priority three: Victims and survivors voice

Aim:

Make sure victims and survivors meaningfully shape policy, practice, commissioning, service improvement and system change. Use their voices to influence every stage of the domestic abuse and VAWG response.

Key actions:

- Improve transparency, accountability and rights by sharing performance information and providing clear ways for people to give feedback or make complaints.
- Embed survivor voice in courts and justice processes by strengthening trauma-informed practice and communication throughout the process.
- Embed survivor informed commissioning and improvement by involving survivors in service review, evaluation and redesign.
- Support lived experience led community change through survivor informed awareness activity and engagement.
- Make sure survivors are supported through complex and traumatic processes, including reviews, high risk cases and bereavement.
- Strengthen insight, representation and feedback by capturing lived experience consistently and including underrepresented groups.

Key outcomes:

- Survivor voices shape how services are designed, delivered and improved.
- Greater transparency and accountability improve trust and experience across services.
- Trauma-informed practice improves survivor experience across all agencies, including the justice system.
- Lived experience insight is more representative and clearly shapes system change.



Strategic priorities and actions

Priority four: Support for victims and survivors

Aim:

Make sure every victim and survivor (adults and children) receives timely, safe, and high-quality support.

Key actions:

- Improve service accessibility, responsiveness and capacity by reducing delays, clarifying response times, and strengthening engagement in low uptake areas.
- Strengthen access to safe accommodation and housing support by expanding emergency options, improving move-on pathways and strengthening sanctuary measures.
- Embed joined up health, mental health and substance use support so survivors can access trauma-informed care and clear referral pathways.
- Improve adult safeguarding responses for people experiencing domestic abuse alongside complex needs through better identification, training and shared learning.
- Make sure services are inclusive and accessible by strengthening outreach and removing barriers for under-represented and disabled victims and survivors.
- Strengthen support for navigating the justice system and staying safe by improving advocacy, information and access to protective measures.
- Help people recover and move forward by increasing peer and group support, strengthening help for those affected by economic abuse, and supporting people to live more independent lives.

Key outcomes:

- Victims and survivors access the right support faster, with clear pathways and response times.
- More survivors are safer through improved accommodation, housing options and safety planning.
- Support is trauma-informed, joined up and inclusive of diverse needs.
- Survivors maintain safety, wellbeing and recovery over the long term.



Strategic priorities and actions

Priority five: Perpetrator accountability

Aim:

Make sure perpetrators of domestic abuse and VAWG are identified early, managed effectively, held accountable and supported to change harmful behaviour, reducing repeat harm and improving victim safety.

Reduce harm by intervening early with those who cause it and improving justice outcomes.

Key actions:

- Improve the quality of perpetrator programme referrals, readiness and engagement to increase completion and support behaviour change.
- Strengthen multiagency risk management of high harm perpetrators (including Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to reduce repeat and escalating abuse.
- Make sure people are protected from abuse by using the legal powers available to keep them safe and taking action when those protections are breached.
- Use housing and tenancy enforcement tools to disrupt abuse and safeguard victims, with clear joint working between housing, probation and police.
- Build workforce skills and professional culture so practitioners balance trauma-informed practice with strong perpetrator accountability.
- Strengthen technology, intelligence and data-sharing to identify patterns, track risk and target action across agencies.
- Expand interventions beyond the criminal justice system through community, workplace and early readiness routes that address harmful behaviour.

Key outcomes:

- Perpetrators are identified earlier and managed as a priority to reduce harm.
- Repeat and escalating abuse reduces through effective action and enforcement.
- More perpetrators engage in interventions and maintain behaviour change.
- Victim safety improves through coordinated, data led multi-agency action.



A coordinated, whole system response

Aim:

Strengthen partnerships, governance, workforce skills and data systems.

To make sure effective delivery and achievement of the strategy, the following enablers will support all priorities:

- Multi-agency coordination
- Data, monitoring and governance
- Workforce development

Key outcomes:

- Better coordination and consistency across services.
- Improved quality of response for victims and survivors.
- Clear oversight and ongoing improvement.
- Lessons learned from Domestic Abuse Related Deaths (DARDs) are used to improve practice.

Key actions:

- Establish a cross partnership Domestic Abuse and VAWG Board.
- Develop shared performance dashboards.
- Make sure consistent trauma-informed training for all frontline roles.
- Strengthen links between housing, policing, health, children's services, adult social care and the voluntary sector.
- Make sure compliance with duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Develop a shared communication and learning plan across agencies.

Additional areas to be addressed:

These areas will not sit as separate priorities. Instead, they will be integrated across the five main priorities where they best align:

- Enforcement and Criminal Justice
- Housing and Homelessness
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Empowerment
- Technology and Digital Safety

This approach makes sure these important areas are addressed throughout the strategy while maintaining a clear and focused structure.



Communications and engagement:

Strategic communications and engagement will be coordinated through relevant partnership sub groups and the Safe Steps campaign.

This will make sure consistent, trauma informed messages reach survivors, families, professionals and communities, and that communications reflect lived experience, local pathways to support and shared partnership priorities.



The strategy sets the long term direction and priorities for Barnsley's response.

Detailed actions, performance measures and key indicators will be developed through delivery plans for each priority area, led by partnership sub groups for each priority, with progress monitored through a shared performance framework and reported regularly to the Domestic Abuse Partnership.

The delivery plans will set out how this strategy will be delivered in practice and will include:

- **Actions:** the specific tasks needed to achieve each priority.
- **Lead agency:** the organisation responsible for driving each action.
- **Timescales:** clear deadlines and milestones for delivery.
- **Success measures:** indicators that show whether actions are having the intended impact.
- **Funding requirements:** any resources needed to deliver the work.
- **Review points:** planned checks to monitor progress and adjust activity where needed.

This makes sure coordinated delivery, clear accountability and measurable improvement across the partnership.

Evaluation and review



We are committed to developing and delivering a clear approach to reviewing progress and making sure this strategy remains responsive and effective.

This includes:

- **Annual progress reports** to monitor delivery, highlight achievements and identify areas for improvement.
- **A mid-strategy review** to assess overall impact and adjust priorities or actions where needed.
- **Regular refreshes** in line with national guidance, legislation, and emerging local need.
- **Ongoing improvement** through regular feedback, including learning from survivors, practitioners and partners.

This approach makes sure the strategy remains responsive, evidence informed and accountable across the partnership.

Glossary

VAWG - Violence Against Women and Girls

A term used to describe a range of harmful behaviours directed at women and girls because of their gender, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and harassment.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - An Act of Parliament

An act of parliament that created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, strengthened protections for victims and recognised children as victims.

Domestic Abuse Partnership - Leads the Barnsley Domestic Abuse Strategy

A partnership that brings together key organisations to provide strategic leadership, oversee progress, monitor outcomes and ensure accountability across Barnsley.

IDVA - Independent Domestic Violence Advocate

A trained specialist who provides independent, confidential support and advocacy to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly those at high risk of harm.

IDAS - Independent Domestic Abuse Services

The commissioned service in Barnsley that provides domestic abuse support, advocacy, training and prevention services for victims and survivors.

BSARCS - Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Counselling Service

A commissioned specialist service that offers counselling, advocacy and support to people affected by sexual violence and abuse in Barnsley.

GROW - Women's Organisation Delivering Services in Barnsley

A commissioned specialist service that provides trauma-informed support for women.

Level Up - Perpetrator Support Programme for Young People

A commissioned specialist service that provides support, accountability and behaviour change for young people aged 11 to 15. Delivered by Cranstoun.

Inspire to Change - Regional Perpetrator Behaviour Change Programme

A South Yorkshire commissioned specialist service for people aged 16 and over who have been abusive towards a partner or family member. Delivered by Cranstoun.

MARAC - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

A regular meeting held three times a month where agencies share information about high risk domestic abuse cases to improve safety planning and reduce the risk of serious harm.

MADA - Multi Agency Domestic Abuse

A daily multi agency meeting approach used to address immediate safeguarding risks, strengthen coordination and improve risk management. Currently used by children's services.

MATAC - Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination

A police led partnership approach used to manage and disrupt high harm perpetrators through coordinated multi agency action.

CPS - Crown Prosecution Service

The public body responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police in England and Wales.

RSHE - Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Statutory education delivered in schools covering relationships, sexual health, wellbeing and keeping safe.

IFD - Integrated Front Door

A multi-agency safeguarding arrangement that brings together key services to assess concerns and agree appropriate responses for children and families.

NRPF - No Recourse to Public Funds

An immigration condition that prevents access to most welfare benefits and housing assistance, creating additional barriers to safety and support.

KPIs - Key Performance Indicators

Measures used to monitor performance, progress and outcomes across services and partnerships.

DARDs - Domestic Abuse Related Deaths

A statutory review process used when domestic abuse is known or suspected to be a contributing factor. It supports learning and system improvement. Previously known as domestic homicide reviews.

Recognised abuse types

Physical Abuse

The use of physical force to cause harm, injury or fear, including hitting, pushing, strangulation or the use of weapons.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Behaviour that causes emotional harm, distress or fear, including humiliation, threats, blame, isolation or gaslighting.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual activity or behaviour, often part of a pattern of abuse, that involves coercion, manipulation or pressure.

Sexual Violence

Sexual acts carried out without consent, including rape and sexual assault, whether by a partner, someone known to the victim or a stranger.

Sexual Exploitation

Abuse that involves manipulating, coercing or forcing someone into sexual activity for another person's gain, often linked to power imbalance, threats or vulnerability.

Financial or Economic Abuse

Controlling or exploiting someone's money, benefits or resources to restrict independence and create dependence.

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour

A pattern of behaviour used to dominate, isolate or control someone, limiting their freedom and sense of safety.

Threatening or Intimidating Behaviour

Actions or language intended to frighten, coerce or control someone, including threats of violence or harm.

Stalking

Repeated, unwanted behaviour that causes fear, distress or alarm, such as persistent contact, monitoring or following.

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or degrading environment.

Physical, Emotional or Psychological Harm

Injury or damage to a person's body or mental wellbeing caused by abuse, violence or trauma.

Online and Technology Facilitated Abuse

Abuse carried out using digital technology, including harassment, stalking, threats, image based abuse, and monitoring or control through devices, apps or social media.

This Strategy has been developed with the support of Barnsley’s Domestic Abuse Partnership, whose member organisations are listed below. We would like to thank all the partners who helped to develop the Strategy, including those who attended our Domestic Abuse Workshop and shared their knowledge, experiences and ideas.

We would especially like to thank the survivors who shared their lived experiences. Their views and experiences have helped us better understand the impact of domestic abuse and have played an important role in shaping this Strategy and its priorities.

Barnsley Council

- Adults Social Care/Safeguarding
- Children’s Social Care/Safeguarding
- Children’s Education, Early Start & Prevention
- Housing and Welfare
- Public Health
- Safer Neighbourhoods Service
- Youth Justice Service

Health

- Barnsley Healthcare Federation (BHF)
- Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Mental Health Service (SWYPFT)
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Justice and Community Safety

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Probation Service Yorkshire and Humber
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Police
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA)
- Violence Reduction Unit

Community and Voluntary Sector

- Barnsley Recovery Steps
- Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS)
- Cranstoun
- GROW Project
- Perpetrator Programme
- The Youth Association
- Thrive (Waythrough)

Housing

- Berneslai Homes

Find out more information on our website

www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/community-safety-and-crime/domestic-abuse-sexual-harm-and-violence-against-women-and-girls/

Or click on the button below.

**Domestic abuse, sexual harm
and violence against women and girls.**



When you're ready,
we're here.