

**DOMESTIC ABUSE AND  
VIOLENCE STRATEGY  
FOR BOLTON**

**2016 - 2018**

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## FOREWORD

Bolton has made great strides in the past couple of years with the work we have undertaken around Domestic Abuse. We recognise however that we still have a long way to go in our quest to end domestic abuse.

Working in partnership, we have made a firm commitment to strengthen and increase our efforts to reduce the levels of domestic abuse and ensure that the right help is available at the right time.

Whilst there has been an increase in reporting to the police, we know all too well that so many more incidents go unreported and undetected. We want to enhance our efforts to raise awareness around domestic abuse and at the same time equip our front line professionals and providers of services with the necessary skills and training to offer the most effective level of support for our victims, their children and their families.

We want to reduce the level of repeat cases and we want to be there to support them from the start, to identify people at a much earlier stage so that low level domestic abuse does not escalate to life threatening, high risk. Early identification and intervention is key to achieving this and we will develop new and innovative approaches through our Public Service Reform programme.

This updated strategy sends a clear message of our on-going commitment to continue to challenge domestic abuse so that our residents can live a life free from fear.



**Donna Ball**  
**Chair: Bolton Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership**

As Cabinet Member for Community Safety (including Domestic Abuse) I have seen the progress made by the Domestic Abuse & Violence Partnership over the last couple of years. I have been impressed with the professionalism from agencies across the public, private and VCSE sector who all want to improve the lives of those families that suffer from this damaging issue. I want to say a big thank you to everyone involved.

There is still more that we need to do to ensure that those who suffer from this abuse, including children, are supported to help them recover.

We need to continue with prevention based activities so that children and young people understand what is and what isn't a healthy relationship. We also need to ensure that children who are in families where domestic abuse is taking place receive swift support and I would like to see improved use of the Early Help process under Bolton's Framework for Action.

I believe with the partnership in place we can continue to improve the lives of those who are most vulnerable in our society.



**Councillor Derek Burrows**  
**Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Policing**

# **BOLTON'S DOMESTIC ABUSE & VIOLENCE STRATEGY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Domestic Abuse & Violence Strategy is a refreshed statement of Bolton's approach to improving outcomes for adults, families and children and young people who experience domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse and violence (DAV) is a complex and cross cutting issue that impacts on health, social care, housing, crime, and impacts on both the public, private and voluntary sectors. For this reason one of the overriding purposes of this strategy is to ensure that the issues relating to DAV retain a strong and visible focus for the agencies and partners who form the Community Safety Partnership (Be Safe), Adult Safeguarding Board, Children Safeguarding Board, and Health & Wellbeing Board. It is envisaged, therefore, that this strategy will signal a strong and meaningful commitment on the part of these partnerships and the agencies involved in them to both provide clear policy direction across the key agencies and to support a co-ordinated response to DAV in the borough

## **PURPOSE**

The strategy sets out the priorities based on the work of the Domestic Abuse & Violence Partnership over the last two years<sup>1</sup> and is guided by the best available evidence about the long term effectiveness of interventions.

Much work has been conducted in the borough aimed at addressing DAV and from this a great deal of efficient practice has been identified. We recognise however that more is needed to create an environment where people can live without fear of harm. This strategy intends to further promote and develop over the next two years a co-ordinated, effective and sustainable approach to preventing and reducing domestic abuse across the Borough.

This updated strategy is aimed at practitioners either directly, or indirectly, involved in domestic abuse and violence (DAV) and sets out the coordinated community response, highlighting the priorities for the partnership and the key areas for action to tackle DAV.

- Reduce the prevalence and impact of DAV
- Improve early identification and prevention of DAV
- Ensure victims and their children are effectively protected and supported
- Provide a whole system approach that seeks to work with the family unit.

## **DEFINITION**

This Strategy will adopt the current national definition of domestic violence and abuse.

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

‘Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and

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<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive strategic assessment was undertaken in 2013.

capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour'

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

This definition incorporates so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and recognises that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. The partnership further recognises that parents can also be victims of abuse.

Whilst the definition now includes 16 and 17 year olds, it is important to recognise that the duties and responsibilities pursuant to the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, combined with the provisions contained within the government publication from 2010 - Working Together to Safeguard Children still apply and should take precedence for persons aged 16 and 17.

## **IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Domestic abuse and violence is a serious social problem that cuts across all social, economic and cultural groups and has a potentially wide-ranging, lasting and devastating impact upon those affected by it. It represents a high proportion of violent crime occurring across the borough.

DAV is very common and research shows that it can affect everyone regardless of age, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, disability or lifestyle.

The biggest risk factor for experiencing DAV is having a disability, being young and poor, and most commonly perpetrated by men against women, although gay men are also particularly at risk.

DAV tends to increase in frequency and severity over time. It is not more common in any specific ethnic group but barriers to seeking help may mean that those from some ethnic minority communities may stay in a relationship longer and therefore are more likely to endure more abuse.

Evidence has shown there is a correlation between multiple deprivation and incidences of DAV. Whilst all wards in Bolton experience reported DAV to the police those wards in areas of multiple deprivations record the highest levels.

Some types of abuse however continue to go unreported and so un-noticed; these include emotional, financial, sexual and psychological abuse. The prevalence of domestic abuse will therefore continue to be a lot higher than the numbers reported and shared in the public arena.

The estimated cost of DAV in Bolton is estimated at £74.1m across the public sector<sup>2</sup>.

We know that the effects of domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children and can affect school attainment and healthy growth and development which will have a lasting impact on their adult lives. Research tells us that children growing up in households where there is domestic abuse, grow up themselves to either becoming a victim or a perpetrator in adult life. Research has clearly shown links between father's / partner's violence to mothers,

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<sup>2</sup> This cost includes; physical and mental, criminal justice, social services, housing and refuge, civil legal, economic, human and emotional. Source Home Office

and their children (usually sons) replicating that behaviour towards their parents (usually mothers).

Teenagers experience high levels of relationship abuse. The 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales found that young people aged 16 to 19 were more likely to suffer intimate partner abuse in the last year than any other age range.

Most perpetrators of domestic violence will never or infrequently come into contact with the police, and the police only come to know about less than a quarter (23%) of the worst cases of domestic violence, and of those incidents reported, about a quarter result in arrest.

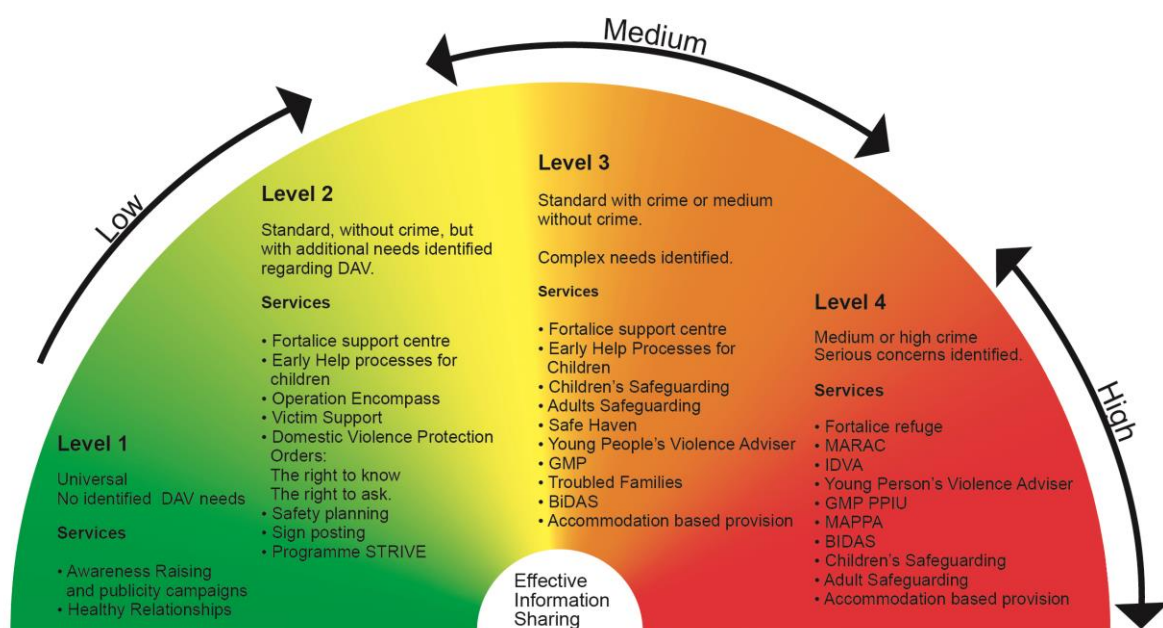
## BOLTON'S COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model has been identified nationally and internationally as effective practice in tackling domestic abuse in a multi-agency setting. The model acknowledges that no one agency can address DAV and only by working together can agencies make a difference.

Every agency who has a responsibility for dealing with victims of DAV, their children or perpetrators, must work effectively within their own agency **AND** with all the other agencies that also have that responsibility; to secure the safety of the victim and their children and hold perpetrators to account. Many victims present with multiple needs, for example, women experiencing domestic violence are up to fifteen times more likely to misuse alcohol and up to nine times more likely to misuse substances than women who have not been victims of this type of abuse/violence.

Through this strategy and actions identified in the business plan we will work across all boards, partnerships, services and agencies to aligned information sharing, training and awareness raising and to the sustainable funding, commissioning and delivery of high quality services for victims and their families.

## Levels of Need and Provision in Bolton



## OVERARCHING THEMES

We will continue with the four themes we identified and worked through within our last strategy. Much progress has been made and we want to maintain the momentum. We recognise that domestic abuse and violence needs to be tackled at all levels and for focus not to be just on high risk cases. We want to tackle low and medium risk domestic abuse too as we do not want escalation to high risk at a later stage.

### Theme 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Our emphasis has to be given to early identification and reporting of DAV by raising awareness and knowledge so that victims, children and young people know what it is and where they can get support. We want to increase their capacity and confidence to respond and report. We want to be able to stop people with low level needs becoming priority cases or repeat victims. Investment has to be channelled in this area.

Our aim is to ensure that stakeholders, including the community recognise their roles and responsibilities in tackling domestic violence, and that services for victims, offenders and families are fit for purpose, are improving outcomes and are in accordance with safeguarding duties. This means working proactively across the Partnership to stop domestic abuse from happening in the first place. Prevention can provide a means for long term and sustainable reductions in violence and abuse. We need to ensure that the strategy focuses on activities that identify victims and their families at a much earlier stage.

#### What have we done so far?

We have made progress in a number of areas including:

*Healthy Relationships:* This programme has been delivered by Fortalice to 47 schools across Bolton initially funded by Bolton Council and Bolton at Home. To date over 3,778 individual children have accessed the programme with 706 teaching staff attending training sessions on 'Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children'. The input has resulted in 162 domestic abuse disclosures made by children. Sustainability has always been an objective and going forward 30 schools in Bolton are now self-funding this programme, which is testament of its value and need within the school environment.

*Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS):* This is a General Practice-based domestic abuse and violence training support and referral programme, identifying unmet need outside of the criminal justice system. Two Advocate Educators (AEs) have been appointed to deliver the training and education, promote clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic abuse service. Of the 50 Practices in Bolton, 24 have received the training in 2015. Contact is being made with the remaining 26 to schedule dates throughout 2016. The AEs work with the patients, offering advice, advocacy, support and sign posting. In 2015, the AEs received 119 referrals from GP Practices. 18 of these cases were referred to MARAC as high risk cases.

*Awareness Raising Campaigns:* A series of posters have been developed around four specific themes (vulnerable adults, teenagers, children witness and male and female victim) as part of targeted campaigns. During the 16 Days of activism against gender violence various activities were coordinated to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

#### What we plan to do next?

Our Business Plan for 2016-18 highlights a number of areas for continuity, progression and development including;

*Operation Encompass:* a model which enables schools to be notified the next working day where a child has been present at a domestic abuse incident and the police have attended. This overall aim of the model is to support schools to respond to a child's needs where they experience domestic abuse within their home. A pilot is underway in the Farnworth (South) cluster.

*Programme STRIVE:* A successful Home Office Innovation Fund bid from Greater Manchester. The programme is split into three work streams – victim revisits, enhanced service provision, and perpetrator change. The victim revisits occur following a referral from the police for standard risk cases. The 2 year pilot is testing the use of volunteers responding with the 'window of opportunity'; which has been tested by GMP to reduce further calls and demand on the police. It also aims to ensure these families receive the appropriate sign-posting at the earliest opportunity.

*Workforce Development:* Following an audit of training carried out by agencies we will develop and deliver a domestic abuse training package for front-line professionals. We want a workforce which is equipped to recognise domestic abuse early and intervene responsively and effectively to reduce the likelihood of escalation. We want to be in a position where domestic abuse enquiries become a routine of good practice and professionals know where to refer.

*The role of family and friends:* Targeted work will be focused around how family and friends can support their loved ones to recognise domestic abuse and violence and how they can get support. This has been identified following a recent domestic homicide review. Further work will be carried out to promote the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.

*Early Help for Children:* Specialist providers of domestic abuse services are scoping the current offer to children suffering from domestic abuse within their family lives. There is a commitment to ensure the Framework for Action for Children is understood and effectively used within services, including an enhanced use of the Early Help process.

## **Theme 2: Provision of Services**

We will provide high quality, effective and accessible support services for victims and their families to ensure that they are empowered to improve their safety and make long term changes to re-build their lives free from abusive relationships. We will work to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours of those who perpetrate domestic abuse and who are outside of the criminal justice system.

### What have we done so far?

We have made progress in a number of areas including:

*Practitioner Handbook:* A Domestic Abuse and Violence Practitioners Handbook has been developed in partnership with the Bolton's Safeguarding Children's Board. It is available on the Bolton Safeguarding Children Board Website - <http://boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/documents/2015/01/bolton-domestic-abuse-handbook.pdf>. The Handbook covers: Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, enabling disclosure and making an initial response, risk assessments, safety planning, legal options and sanctions, and a directory of support services (at all levels of need).

*Young Person Violence Advocate Project (YPVA):* A project designed to support young people aged 16-19 years to reflect the national change in definition of domestic abuse. In 2015, 92 young people were supported. Of these, 43 were referrals received via the



MARAC. The most common form of abuse has been emotional abuse and the jealous and controlling behaviour of the perpetrator.

#### What we plan to do next?

*Public Service Reform & Complex Dependency:* Bolton is working through its programme of delivery in these areas. This includes identifying individuals and families under Family First<sup>3</sup> where domestic abuse is a factor. It also involves identifying individuals that would benefit from the emerging Public Service Hub arrangements. The PSR Hub will act as a physical and virtual space in which partners can work flexibly together to efficiently coordinate support for the most complex and vulnerable residents, improving outcomes.

*Perpetrator Behaviour Change:* Working with perpetrators outside of the Criminal Justice System is a gap in Bolton. A local pilot took place between the council, local domestic abuse services and the Probation Service. A small cohort of perpetrators took part in the programme, which delivered some benefit for families. Decisions were taken not to further commission the programme due to the changes to the Probation Service and the pilots that were due to take place across Greater Manchester developing a strength based approach to perpetrator behaviour change within a community setting. It is anticipated that once these pilots have been evaluated the Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner will be in a position to look at investment opportunities working with localities.

*Commissioning Services:* Effective management of resources across all agencies and organisations is critical so that we ensure the safety and protection of all victims and children across the whole spectrum of risk.

### **Theme 3: Protection**

We want to ensure Bolton is a safe place through swift, effective and safe justice. We will ensure there is effective support for victims and their children who are at risk of serious harm and violence. We will provide better support for victims and their families by effective partnership working and clear communication with statutory, voluntary and community sectors, working together to share information and agree practical action.

#### What have we done so far?

*Specialist service provision:* In 2015 the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) Service<sup>4</sup> supported 330 individuals. The Safe Haven Project<sup>5</sup> worked with 160 individuals along with 260 children. The Refuge housed and supported 107 women and 148 children. The Fortalice Support Centre engaged with 430 women and offered advice, training, group work and counselling. 117 young people have been supported through the young people's project. Victim Support received 98 referrals. The Pet Fostering Service temporarily housed 60 pets whilst families were in the refuge/supported housing having fled domestic abuse.

*Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC):* Bolton continues to deliver an effective response for those at high risk of harm. Meetings have moved to every fortnight and a new referral form is been developed to better reflect recommendations from a Domestic Homicide Review including information about children.

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<sup>3</sup> Family First is the local name for the Troubled Families Programme

<sup>4</sup> IDVA Service: Provides advocacy and safety planning to high risk victims of domestic abuse. Referrals come from the MARAC.

<sup>5</sup> Safe Haven Project: Provides floating outreach support where the risk has de-escalated from high to medium.

### What we plan to do next

To continue to provide and build on existing provision which meets needs at all levels.

*Offender Management:* Assess recommendations from the Greater Manchester review on Integrated Offender Management and determine how these arrangements can support domestic abuse and violence.

*Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews:* We intend to develop our understanding and share learning from recent reviews. The action plan reflects specific recommendations made from reviews. We will continue to share practice and understanding with others via Greater Manchester arrangements.

### **Theme 4: Participation**

We want to develop effective mechanisms to engage with service users so that they can contribute to improvements in policy, practice, and commissioning. We will ensure we engage with victims in the development of activity so that provision is effective, efficient, sensitive and responsive to local need.

### What have we done so far?

A Domestic Abuse and Violence Practitioner Forum has been established made up of front-line staff to provide a sounding board for practitioners to discuss issues and explore working practices with emphasis on safeguarding and domestic abuse. The forum aims to enhance practitioners' understanding of and enable their contribution towards effective service delivery and management of domestic abuse cases.

Our targeted campaigns were developed in consultation with our Youth Council and users of specialist DAV services.

### What we plan to do next

We will continue to run the practitioner forum. We will also scope the possibility of forming a youth panel of peer educators which includes representation from young people who have been victims of DAV. This is a growing age cohort within the domestic abuse arena and we feel youth participation is an integral part of any service planning and delivery.

We will continue to engage and consult with service users around service development and delivery – they are the recipients and it is imperative that services are fit-for-purpose and meet user requirements.

The partnership will seek to identify opportunities for efficient collaborative working across Greater Manchester and will be represented at all AGMA domestic abuse related forums and groups.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY**

This strategy is an overarching document, which sets out a common understanding, commitment and support from key stakeholders to tackle domestic abuse and violence in Bolton. It promotes working together in a planned way with clearly structured partnership working. It has been developed through consultation with and input from stakeholders and will continue to be updated and evolve as needs, issues and national policies change. A business plan accompanies the strategy detailing each of the strategic themes and commitments, highlighting:

- Objectives
- Actions required for delivery
- Desired Outcomes
- Lead Officer/Group
- Timescales

Our dedicated Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership will take the strategy forward. This will be supported by the Domestic Violence Coordinator who will coordinate delivery and the implementation of the business plan. Our DAV Partnership is made up of identified lead representatives from the agencies responsible for delivering, either directly or indirectly, DAV interventions. Specific sub-groups / task and finish groups will be set-up as needed to drive the implementation of the plan.

The DAV Partnership will formerly report to the Community Safety Partnership (Be Safe), with strong links to other partnerships, e.g. Adult Safeguarding Board, Children Safeguarding Board, and Health & Wellbeing Board, and wider strategies such as the Community Strategy and Alcohol Strategy.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Bolton Domestic Abuse & Violence Strategy will be subjected to regular review and consideration, to:

- Monitor progress against objectives
- Understand whether actions and activities are achieving the required outcomes
- Establish the overall impact and effectiveness of the strategy
- Incorporate new legislation and government directives and reflect local need to ensure continued effectiveness

The Domestic Violence Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring the progress against the business plan. Interim progress reports will be made to the Domestic Abuse & Violence Partnership where successes and achievements will be reported and publicised regularly. Reports by exception will also be submitted to the Community Safety Partnership and other partnerships directly, or indirectly, involved in DAV.

We want to identify ways of improving the application of resources to achieve better outcomes for victims and their families. We want to instigate and implement a performance management framework. We will collect robust performance data to better inform us of the effectiveness of the services we are providing, identify gaps/loopholes in provision and develop processes to address them. Accurate, readily available data is essential in identifying high risk victims, trends, hotspots, disparities and other themes which should inform decision making.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

DAV:	Domestic Abuse and Violence
MARAC:	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
IDVA:	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
YPVA:	Young Persons Violence Advisor
GMP PPIU:	Greater Manchester Police Public Protection and Investigation Unit
MAPPA:	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
BiDAS:	Bolton Integrated Drugs and Alcohol Service
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Improve Safety
AE:	Advocate Educator
GP:	General Practitioner
PSR:	Public Service Reform
AGMA:	Association of Greater Manchester Authorities

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

NICE Public Health Guidance<sup>50</sup>: Domestic Violence and Abuse: how health services, Social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively 2014

Early Intervention Foundation – Early Intervention in Domestic Violence and Abuse March 2014

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) – Greater Manchester Police's Approach to tackling domestic abuse 2014

Home office Action Plan – Call to End Violence against Women and Girls Action Plan 2014

Women's Aid National Service Standards and Aya Outcomes Framework 2014

Justice and Rehabilitation Exec Board Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Action Plan Jan 14-March 15

ADASS Guidance on Domestic Abuse and Vulnerable Adults 2013

Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse, ADASS 2013

Home Office – Domestic Homicide Reviews – Common Themes Identified as lessons Learned 2013

Research In practice: Children Experiencing Domestic Violence: A research Review 2011

Adding Value to Local Domestic Abuse Partnerships - Towards a coordinated response to domestic abuse across the Greater Manchester area 2010

Report from the Department of Health Taskforce on the health aspects of violence against Women and Children 2010

Sylvia Walby 2009, Leeds University – social and economic costs of Domestic abuse  
Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Guidelines on investigating Domestic abuse 2008

Vision for Services for Children and Young People affected by domestic violence – Guidance to local commissioners of children's services (2007) CAFCASS, Women's Aid, LGA and Leaders in social care