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Forward

As the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and The Chair of The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board I am proud to share with you the new Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022- 2025.

The Strategy is led by the Council however it has been developed in partnership with agencies from across the borough to ensure that we are able to work more effectively to respond to domestic abuse, in line with the Better Together Principles. In Knowsley we have a successful history of working effectively together with our partners and our approach to domestic abuse is the same, as a partnership we are passionate and committed to improving the welfare and safety of our residents to ensure everyone can thrive and succeed in life.

In Knowsley we are dedicated to tackling domestic abuse ensuring victims and their children know how, when, and where to seek support to stop the cycle of abuse. Domestic Abuse can have a devastating impact on victims, children, their families and friends and the wider community. We know that it can have a long-term impact on health, mental health, educational attainment, employment, and homelessness and for some it can have a lifelong impact. It has no place in Knowsley, and with our partners we are saying No More.

We have established our Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which has the shared goal of tackling and responding to domestic abuse. Significantly Knowsley Council has also made a substantial investment into expanding the front-line team who work directly with victim/survivors as well as perpetrators. Additionally, we invest time into sourcing external funding to further develop and respond to this crucial area of need.

This strategy outlines how Knowsley Council will work together with partners to respond to the impact of domestic abuse, it identifies how we will work towards achieving our Vision and meet the statutory duties and requirements within The Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This document summarises our current responses and the priorities for improving our interventions with victims and children across both community and safe accommodation-based support services and furthermore how we as a partnership will respond together to perpetrators who cause the abuse.

Together we are building better and safer communities.

Cllr Shelley Powell,
Knowsley's Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods



1. Purpose and Vision of the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy

<p>The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025 outlines the Vision and priorities in relation to the multi-agency provision and responses for victims, children impacted upon by domestic abuse and those perpetrators who are causing the abuse.</p> <p>The document outlines the current offer to those impacted upon by domestic abuse, the gaps in the current provision and how Knowsley will implement the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation and support services as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p> <p>The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board recognise that tackling and responding to domestic abuse is everyone's business as such the strategy has been developed over a six-month period with partners across the borough and the feedback from those who have accessed support services.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse is an issue impacting upon services, organisations, and partnerships across Knowsley. The cross-cutting impact of Domestic Abuse is identified as a priority area of need within the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board</i> • <i>The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership</i> • <i>The Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership</i> • <i>The Knowsley Safeguarding Adults Board</i> • <i>The Knowsley Health and Wellbeing Board</i> • <i>The Merseyside Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner</i> • <i>Merseyside Strategic Domestic Violence and Abuse Group</i> <p>The strategy will be reviewed annually by The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, and it will be flexible to the changes in need or prevalence and responsive to user voice and feedback.</p> <p>The strategy outlines the domestic abuse partnership priorities for Knowsley for the next three years, how partners will work together to achieve it and how we will take forward the Vision that:</p> <p><i>"Knowsley has a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse. We want to build communities where domestic abuse is socially unacceptable, where those impacted know how to access support, feel safe and confident to engage with."</i></p>	<div> <p>"I feel learning about domestic abuse, particularly how it affects children has been really useful. Also just talking to you and having someone there to listen to my thoughts and lastly completing work at home, all the writing tasks have helped me to think about things in more depth, it's been therapeutic"</p> <p>(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)</p> </div>
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2. What is Domestic Abuse?

<p>Domestic Abuse is a complex issue and as such it is a cross-cutting policy area which impacts on a range of council and partner services. In Knowsley we recognise that an effective response to domestic abuse is reliant on a strong partnership and an aligned approach.</p> <p>Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents on the part of the abuser (perpetrator), which is controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent, including sexual violence.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 aims is to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that agencies will do everything possible to support them and their children and pursue the perpetrator through the introduction of new legal tools and powers. (Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk): (Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))</p> <p>The Act sets out a statutory definition of domestic abuse and a broad range of behaviours which may constituent domestic abuse and it identifies children impacted upon by domestic abuse as victims. The Act defines the following behaviours as “abusive”, if it consists of:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical or sexual abuse. • violent or threatening behaviour • controlling or coercive behaviour (including when a relationship has ended) • economic abuse • psychological, emotional, or other abuse <p>Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by a partner, an ex-partner, or a family member (when two people are “personally connected” to each other). It is categorised as domestic abuse when both parties are 16 and over.</p> <p>Coercive Control/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 capacities for personal gain and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is a continuing act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim</p> <p>Domestic abuse can happen at any point in a relationship, including when a relationship has ended.</p>	<p>Anyone forced to change their behaviour because they are frightened of the reaction and behaviours towards them from a partner, an ex-partner or a family member is experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Domestic abuse is never the fault of the person who is experiencing it, it is a crime.</p> <div> <p><i>“The violence is hard to cope with, but it is what it does to your mind that can be difficult, your mind needs ‘undoing’. Talking it over in a safe place, trusting someone really helps. You feel isolated and alone, you’re frightened, scared. Being able to talk to someone here gives you support, knowledge and guidance”</i></p> <p><i>(Focus group member The First Step)</i></p> </div>
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3. The Importance of Addressing Domestic Abuse

<p>Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, background, gender, religion, sexuality, or ethnicity. Statistics illustrate most reported domestic abuse is carried out by men and experienced by women.</p> <p>In the year ending March 2020, <u>it is estimated</u> that 1.6 million females and 757,000 males aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse.</p> <p>According to a Home Office Report between April 2020 and March 2021 there were 215 victims killed as a result of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Domestic abuse can have a devastating and long-term impact on a victim and their children. It can impact on their health and wellbeing including significant detrimental impact on self-esteem, mental wellbeing, and economic and employment prospects.</p> <p>Home Office research demonstrates that domestic abuse also has a significant economic cost, estimated to be approximately £66 billion across England and Wales. This includes the significant cost on public services, such as policing and criminal justice, health, and Children's Services. As well as this, there are costs associated with lost output relating to the time victims will take off work and reduced productivity afterwards.</p> <p>The Home Office research report in 2019 estimated that the unit cost on average relating to a domestic abuse victim</p>	<p>(Living with domestic abuse for 3 years) is £34,015.</p> <p>If this is applied to the current levels of referrals in 2020/21 to advocacy support in Knowsley (n. 2014) then the overall cost of domestic abuse in Knowsley is estimated to exceed £68 million pounds per year.</p> <p>If we apply the projected figures of 2,600 victims by 2024/25, this will result in the overall cost for Knowsley reaching a projected £88.4 million pounds per year.</p> <p>The most extreme cost is that of domestic homicide, which has an estimated unit cost of £2.2 million arising from the cost of harms, health services and lost output. Since 2013 Knowsley has unfortunately had seven deaths associated to domestic abuse.</p> <p>Research undertaken by Sylvia Walby, estimates that approximately one in eight of all female suicides and suicide attempts in the UK are due to domestic abuse. This equates to 200 women taking their own lives and 10,000 attempting to do so. That's nearly 30 women attempting suicide every day.</p>	<p>The COVID 19 pandemic has had a further impact on those living with domestic abuse. In 2020 Refuge conducted a study into the prevalence of suicide ideology in refuge, it found that between July and September 2020 four out of every 100 women were contemplating or planning to take their own lives, compared to one in every 100 in 2019.</p> <p>Research highlights the importance of professionals working from a trauma informed approach and the need to be more responsive to the risk of suicide. To achieve this, it is essential to establish safe pathways, accessible interventions, and collaborative practice between those working in mental health and domestic abuse support services.</p> <div> <p>"I found your listening skills really good, you really listened to me. Not only did you listen but you heard me.</p> <p>“(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)</p> </div>
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4. Domestic Abuse Governance in Knowsley

<p>Domestic Abuse is a complex issue and as such it is a cross-cutting policy area which impacts on a range of council and partner services. In Knowsley we recognise that an effective response to domestic abuse is reliant on a strong partnership and an aligned approach.</p> <p>Responsibility for support to victims and adult offenders of domestic abuse falls within the remit of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Portfolio. The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is responsible for overseeing the coordination, the offer and delivery of domestic abuse support services to victims and children and support and challenge to those who perpetrate the abuse.</p> <p>Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities in England to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to perform certain specified functions in relation to Domestic Abuse. The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was established in May 2021.</p>	<p>The Board supports the Council and provides strategic oversight on the issue of Domestic Abuse in Knowsley and reports back to The Community Safety Partnership, The Council and Government on delivering the duties in line with statutory guidance. The Board performs certain specified statutory functions, and these are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the need of Domestic Abuse victims and their children. • Review service provision for domestic abuse and safe accommodation. • Develop and implement a Domestic Abuse Strategy. • Review commissioning arrangements and investments in domestic abuse services. <p>In recognition of the wide-ranging impact and the prevalence of domestic abuse the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025 has been developed together with partners across the borough to ensure that cross cutting priorities and performance outcomes are shared and agreed, to this end the following wider strategies support this domestic abuse strategy, vision, and priorities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Knowsley 2030 Strategy • The Knowsley Community Safety Plan • The Knowsley Children and Families Plan • The Knowsley Early Help and Prevention Strategy. • The Knowsley Housing Strategy • Northwest Probation Service Reducing Reoffending Plan <div> <p><i>"No one explained things to me in the way my advocate did"</i></p> <p>(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)</p> </div>
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5. Current Responses to Domestic Abuse

Specialist Community Based Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support

The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership supports the view that earlier intervention leads to improved outcomes for victims and their families, and that early intervention can reduce re-victimisation and re-offending.

Knowsley has invested in establishing a victim/survivor pathway (16+) that ensures that when referred, all victims of domestic abuse are offered support, regardless of their risk level (low, medium, and high).

I was like a cork in the ocean, and you've picked me up.

Knowsley Council's Safer Communities Service
Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support to **low and medium** risk victims of domestic abuse who are referred to the service by Police or other professionals.,

Operation Enhance
A partnership between Knowsley Council's Safer Communities Service and Merseyside Police. Victims of Domestic Abuse are jointly visited by a Police Officer and a Safer Communities Domestic Abuse Advocate in the days following a Domestic Abuse incident.

The First Step Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy (IDSVA) Service
provide the offer of support to **High-risk** victims of Domestic Abuse, (high risk of serious injury or murder). High risk victims are referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Knowsley Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
meets fortnightly to discuss any new domestic abuse high risk cases, agree actions and review previous cases to ensure appropriate support is in place to reduce risks to individuals referred

The First Step Project and Self-Referral Pathway is the Knowsley area
Voluntary Specialist Domestic Abuse Agency who supports victims of domestic abuse through a self-referral pathway. The service which works only with people who self-refer into our service and are assessed at low to medium risk.

Domestic Abuse Group Work – The Freedom Programme
is a group work programme that examines the roles played by perpetrators, the attitudes and beliefs of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors? Its aim is to help women to make sense of and understand what has happened to them as a result unhealthy relationship and identify the warning signs for any future relationships.

<p>Dedicated Children's Pathway</p> <p>Recognising the devastating impact that witnessing Domestic Abuse can have upon the wellbeing of children, Knowsley's Children's Services have developed needs led support for children. This means that children will have access to emotional and wellbeing support appropriate to their individual needs.</p>	<p>Operation Encompass:</p> <p>aims to support children, by ensuring police communicate directly with schools to inform them that an incident of Domestic Abuse has happened in a child's home enabling schools to provide timely and appropriate support.</p>
	<p>Direct support to children via Targeted and Specialist services:</p> <p>Those families who are open to Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care will also receive support via the lead practitioner or family support worker. This will involve safety planning for children to enable them to identify and recognise the abuse in the home, understand it is not their fault and enable them to keep themselves safe if an incident occurs.</p>
	<p>Therapeutic interventions for children:</p> <p>Individual and group work sessions are provided to children who have been impacted upon by Domestic Abuse. A Domestic Abuse Risk Indicator Matrix (DARIM) risk assessment is completed to identify risks and needs of the child.</p>
	<p>Therapeutic interventions for children (Schools)</p> <p>Schools can refer children who have witnessed or been part of domestic abuse for counselling sessions. These sessions can take place in school or remotely depending on the needs of the child.</p>
	<p>Mental health support worker:</p> <p>All Knowsley secondary schools and most Knowsley primary schools also have access to a mental health support worker in the school setting. These workers can be used for immediate support for children</p>
	<p>Me Time</p> <p>Services or individuals can refer children to access Me Time sessions run by Vibe. The sessions support young people who may require support if they have a caring role with a family member, or if they are vulnerable due to family substance misuse issues, have experienced domestic abuse or have a parent or carer suffering mental health issues or illnesses.</p>

Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Responses

Recognising that to address the issue of domestic abuse and those responsible need to be accountable for their behaviour Knowsley have invested in establishing a dedicated perpetrator pathway for non-statutory perpetrators that runs alongside those statutory interventions delivered by The Probation Service.

Both Knowsley Council Choices Pathway and The Probation Service responses to perpetrators provide a parallel support service to the victims. The support workers liaise directly with the victim/partner to ensure that they understand what the interventions are, what the programme entails, continuously review the risk, and keep them updated about the perpetrator's progress.

"I reflected on one session where they show what a child can hear and the impact it can have on a child, and that really hit me hard as I have my own children"

(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)

Knowsley Council's Safer Communities Service

Choices Pathway work with residents who have been identified as perpetrators of domestic abuse. Based on voluntary engagement, those referred, are supported to change their behaviours to prevent re-offending and re-victimisation.

Knowsley Multi-Agency Task and Coordination

(MATAC) is a risk assessment conference targeted at serial and repeat perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, it aims to safeguard and protect victims and children by holding perpetrators to account, through multi-agency intervention.

The Probation Service -Building Better Relationships (BBR)

An accredited groupwork programme designed for adult males convicted of intimate partner abuse. It considers thinking and research in relation to aggression within relationships. It prioritises the safety of women and children.

The Probation Service HELP Programme

HELP is a pioneering Healthy Relationships Programme taking a preventative approach to Domestic Abuse. The priority is the development and maintenance of healthy intimate relationships.

The Probation Service Skills for Relationships Toolkit

A toolkit for use with domestic abuse perpetrators who are unable to participate in a groupwork programme

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Probation Service also utilise multiagency frameworks/processes to manage the risk posed by perpetrators and to identify additional interventions for factors linked to offending behaviour.

6. Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation

<p>There are times when victims and their children need increased security measures and support services within their own home or need to move from their own home to safer accommodation due to the perpetrator's behaviour.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021: The Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support to all domestic abuse victims and their children, regardless of their relevant protected characteristics. This support can take the form of advocacy support, advice, guidance, responses to complex needs and others as identified within the statutory guidance: Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).</p> <p>In 2021/2022 the Council received a government grant of £459,768 to provide support services within safe accommodation models. The future allocation is yet to be confirmed however future funding will respond to the priorities laid out in priority 5 of this strategy.</p> <div> <p>"All the help I received to find a new home out of the area and the emotional support that was given to me throughout. I was helped with filling out forms and understanding things that I found difficult as I'm not good at reading and writing and get very anxious and worried"</p> <p>(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)</p> </div>	<p>What types of accommodation are considered safe? The Domestic Abuse Act identifies that Safe Accommodation Support Services can be provided in specific single sex Safe Accommodation models:</p> <p>Knowsley Council and Local Social Landlord's work together to respond to the accommodation needs of victims of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Knowsley Housing Solutions Service: When an individual or family are at risk or currently homeless, they are referred to Knowsley Housing Solutions Service where their individual and family needs are assessed to identify and review their housing/homeless status, individual and family support needs.</p> <p>If at immediate risk or homeless due to domestic abuse, victims and their children can be temporarily housed in available accommodation across the borough.</p> <p>This means that local housing authorities must provide temporary accommodation until longer term safe and settled accommodation is secured. The temporary accommodation must be suitable in line with the requirements of the Housing Act 1996.</p> <p>Safe Accommodation in Knowsley: We have the following models of safe accommodation to respond to the needs of victims and their children.</p>	<div> <p>The Knowsley Women & Children's Refuge: 36 bed accommodation-based service for women and children escaping domestic abuse. It accommodates single women and women with up to 9 children plus a suite designed for people with mobility issues. The refuge is staffed 24/7 with support staff and specialist children's workers.</p> </div> <div> <p>Sanctuary Scheme: Enables victims of Domestic Abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is achieved by providing advocacy support and the provision of additional security within the home or to the perimeter of the property, 'installing a sanctuary'.</p> </div> <div> <p>Dispersed Accommodation</p> <p>A partnership across the Liverpool City Region Authorities delivering a Dispersed Accommodation model enabling a safe move within or out of borough providing accommodation and support services.</p> </div>
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7. The Knowsley Needs Assessment & Consultation 2021

Knowsley The Place

Following decades of population decline, Knowsley's population has grown year on year since 2011 (from 145,900 in 2011 to an estimated 152,452 in 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, life expectancy in Knowsley increased and there was consequent growth in the overall number of older people living in the Borough. This growth has been driven primarily by migration into the Borough, with an additional 4,800 houses built in the last 10 years.

As Knowsley's demographic changes and continuing population growth is supported, it has been important to understand the existing challenges that exist within some communities, especially in those parts of the Borough where the concentrations of deprivation remain high. The 2019 release of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation confirmed that Knowsley remained the second most deprived Borough in England - despite the economic growth over the preceding five years.

It is estimated that 37,573 children and young aged live in Knowsley and it's projected by 2030 that will have risen to 39,728 (5.7%).

22.7% of children and young people in Knowsley live in low-income families; in addition, Knowsley has a high rate of children educated in the Borough who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The 2011 Census return revealed 96.1% of Knowsley's residents classified themselves as White British (compared to 87.1% in the North-West region and 79.8% in England).

Understanding the Need

The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment commenced in 2021 and the process examined domestic abuse data relating to victim, children, and perpetrator.

The process identified the current known/reported prevalence of the issue and demographics of those accessing domestic abuse services within the borough, (community and accommodation based).

Data was collated from Merseyside Police, Knowsley Council Services, local domestic abuse specialist services, The Probation Service, Police, and other partner services.

The full needs assessment provides an overview of the issue and impact of domestic abuse in Knowsley and identifies the gaps in provision/support in areas of safe accommodation and community-based provision.

The assessment considered the needs of both men and women, however, acknowledges that domestic abuse is a gendered crime and those reported incidents disproportionately affect women and girls. The assessment also examined the known prevalence and take up of services from those groups with protective characteristics including Black and Ethnic Minority Groups, LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities.

"Helping me to find another home and supporting me with my accommodation move was excellent and dealing with all the agencies involved so I didn't feel like I was on my own. I felt my advocate really understood the problems I faced and always put my needs first. She gave me emotional help when I was feeling low and confused and never made me feel like I was being a nuisance or silly for asking questions. Me and my children would not feel safe like we do now if it had not been for the help of my advocate and my family will be forever thankful to her for all she has done for us"

(User Voice: Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)

Data Highlights – Community Based Referrals

<p>Knowsley Council Safer Communities Domestic Abuse Service</p> <p>In 2020/21 the service received 1290 low and medium referrals. This was an increase of 134 referrals received in 2019/20 and an increase of 344 on the year 2018/19. In 2020/21 the referrals data informs us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merseyside Police account for 87% of the referrals • 98% of the victims were female <p>The Knowsley Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).</p> <p>In 2020/21 there were 530 high risk referrals to MARAC, an increase of 11 referrals received in 2019/20.</p> <p>Police referrals have increased from a 68% share of referrals to 73% in the most recent year of 2020/21. In 2020/21 the referrals data informs us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97% of the victims were female • 96% were white British • 1.5% had a recorded disability 	<p>Perpetrators in Knowsley</p> <p>The Knowsley Safer Communities Service (Perpetrator Pathway) received 119 referrals between April 2019 and March 2021 with 100% being male.</p> <p>The National Probation Service:</p> <p>Figures illustrate that in 2020/21 in Knowsley,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 91 Perpetrators of domestic abuse. • 99% were male • 84% identified as heterosexual. • 98% were white British. • <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>As part of the data gathering for this needs assessment, partners were asked to supply data and demographics for victims and children to allow to build a wider picture of need across the borough and in turn, allow for better targeted services and support. In Knowsley:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,116 children were in contact with Knowsley Children's Social Care between 2019 and 2021. • 558 were male, 528 were female. • 89% of all referrals were "White/British" (n.996). 	<p>Listening Ear Therapeutic Intervention for Children affected by Domestic Abuse</p> <p>In the financial year 2020/21 the service received 113 individual referrals for children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53% of referrals were male. • 77% were white British. • 6 Clients identified as having a disability. • 139 sessions were offered within the school setting. <div> <p>"A lot of the things you said resonated with me, I forgot all the good things about myself, you were the person who reminded me of them"</p> <p>(User Voice Knowsley Council Safer Communities Service)</p> </div>
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Data Highlights - Safe Accommodation

<p>Safe Accommodation: The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (2021) collected data relating to Safe Accommodation models and support from 2018 – 2021.</p> <p>Knowsley Housing Solution Service 188 victims were referred to the service for assessment of need of which 85% were female, 1.6% were from the Black and ethnic minority groups and 22% identified themselves as disabled.</p> <p>Refuge: From the overall numbers of enquiries (n.898), 17% were successful in gaining safe accommodation in refuge (n.155). The main reason for unsuccessful referrals was that the refuge had been full at the time of referral. Of the 155 victims accessing refuge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% came from outside of the Knowsley area. • There were 190 children accessing refuge. • 88 identified themselves as disabled (mental health, long term health conditions, mobility issues, amongst others). • 22 victims (14%) were from Black and ethnic minority groups. <p>The average length that a victim stays within refuge in Knowsley is increasing illustrating the need for increased resettlement support services.</p>	<p>Children's Support in Refuge: Children who reside in refuge are offered intervention from the in- house children's intervention service, this included group work, one to one session, and other activities.</p> <p>During 2019/2020, 52 children accessed the refuge children's support service with nearly 1000 face to face contacts.</p> <p>During 2020/2021, 65 children accessed the service with nearly 900 faces to face contacts with the children. This figure is slightly reduced due to the service responding to the COVID restrictions put in place to protect the families.</p> <p>Sanctuary Schemes: Victims requiring sanctuary intervention are currently supported via community-based provision. Between 2017 and 2021, 351 victims were supported to remain in their own home with increased security measures (not victims receiving all support access target hardening).</p> <p>Dispersed Accommodation: Data from 2017/18 to 2020/21, revealed a total of 138 victims accessed dispersed accommodation services in Knowsley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requests for dispersed accommodation have increased from 21 in 2018/19 to 45 and 47 for the subsequent years thereafter. • Most victims accessing services have been female with only 10 victims since 2017/18 being male victims of domestic violence. • The numbers of children aged 0-17 in dispersed accommodation services have increased by almost 50 when comparing 2017/18 with the most recent data of 2020/21, which shows that the greatest need for accommodation has been from victims with young families. • From the 138 victims accessing the service only 5 identified as disabled, 5 identified as LGBTQ+ and 7 victims were from the Black and ethnic minority groups. <p>Key findings: Key findings suggest that there is a need to review the safe accommodation offer to ensure it has capacity and expertise to respond to all victims of domestic abuse, this should include the resettlement support required. This is a key area of need that should be addressed through the implementation of this Domestic Abuse Strategy over the next three years.</p>
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Professional consultation Process

To further inform the Needs Assessment and to support the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy, a series of workshops with partners took place over the summer months of 2021 to gather their views, insight and help understand the need and to shape the strategy and its priorities. Through group sessions, several key lines of enquiry emerged which has provided some of the basis for the development of the strategy and the areas of focus. Some of the key themes are outlined below

<p>Getting the basics right:</p> <p>There was a strong sense among professionals that the council focus should be on 'getting the basics right' both in terms of service provision and training and workforce development. Training and workforce development to enable a better, more consistent understanding of domestic abuse and patterns of behaviour across the partnership was seen as a critical facet of improvement and ensuring domestic abuse cases are properly identified and provided with effective support.</p>	<p>Identification and screening:</p> <p>The need for more robust and consistent mechanisms to identify domestic abuse in the borough emerged as a particularly strong theme. Participants were keen to stress that there is excellent practice in Knowsley and referred the increasing use of primary care staff to identify and screen for domestic abuse, however, it is acknowledged that identification and screening needs to be embedded more consistently across partners so that the council can plan and deliver services accordingly. Similarly, there were concerns that the patterns and nuances of domestic abuse aren't always understood properly, and therefore identification and management of risk can be patchy.</p>	<p>Tenancy and housing:</p> <p>Professionals outlined their concerns about the risk of a victim returning to a perpetrator if proper housing and tenancy support is not put in place at the earliest opportunity. Across the workshops, the need for practical assistance, financial support, tenancy support or sanctuary support was viewed as a crucial part of the response, particularly. Alongside this, professionals talked about how domestic abuse victims often feel 'de-skilled' due to the level of control and isolation they have experienced. As such, workshops identified the need to bolster skills development as a way of boosting confidence so that victims feel equipped to cope alone without the perpetrator.</p>
<p>Partnership working:</p> <p>A theme which emerged was the need to improve partnership working and information sharing across organisations to ensure victim-survivors can move seamlessly through services and 'only tell their story once'. Although improving, participants relayed concerns that all partners need work more effectively together and provide joint and aligned interventions, for example joint police and advocate role in the delivery of Domestic Abuse Disclosure Schemes such as Clare's Law. In addition, it was felt that there is a lack of knowledge or understanding from partners around services the council offer to victims – which may result in victims and children not accessing appropriate support.</p>	<p>Interventions for children and young people:</p> <p>Professionals highlighted some of the gaps around support for children who have witnessed domestic abuse. Insufficient age-appropriate trauma-based responses. Similarly, many participants recognised the often-inter-generational nature of domestic abuse and felt strongly that there needs to be a more concerted focus on delivering healthy relationship and educational programmes to children from a much earlier age. Partners also highlighted the inter-related and cross cutting links between children impacted by domestic abuse and the risk of other vulnerability to children such as engagement within anti-social behaviour, criminality, risk of child exploitation and the formation of potential future unhealthy relationships. The key message being that early intervention and prevention models are required to prevent such future potential crimes impacting on children.</p>	

The Knowsley Needs Assessment 2021 & Consultation

What did domestic abuse victims say about services in Knowsley say?

During the Needs Assessment Process user feedback was collated and a series of qualitative user voice interviews were conducted with victims of domestic abuse to gain some insight into the victim experience of multi-agency services and responses, the responses are summarised below:

- There was a reported lack of understanding and victim empathy from some services who do not fully understand the effect domestic abuse has on a victim and how they may present. Whilst the understanding of the victim position that comes with a specialist domestic abuse advocate is recognised as being different than other services.
- There were victims who felt that they were not always dealt with fairly by services particularly statutory and criminal justice services.

- Some victims had a lack of understanding about what will happen to them, and their family following an initial contact with services or call for police service.
- Victims felt respected by their Domestic Abuse Advocate however having the advocacy support for longer would have been good.
- 63% of victims did not feel safe or only felt quite safe at the start of advocacy support. 88% felt safe or very safe at the end.
- Victim's felt that there is a need for a more joined up approach between all partners for example closer working between police and advocates to support the client throughout the criminal justice and domestic abuse disclosure process.
- Victims identified that their other needs required support prior to the issue of domestic abuse for example mental health, drug, and alcohol recovery – this can often prevent the domestic abuse work starting.

Out of 113 individuals who engaged with The First Step Programme, 97 said they feel more confident about the future after engaging with services. We recognise the importance of discussing what options are available to an individual and supporting them to make informed choices in their life – this is paramount not only to provide safer options to a client, but also to encourage them to make their own decisions and improve their self-esteem.

Victims approach our service when they are at a critical point in their lives/relationship, with many often asking the question should I stay, or should I go?

They also ask 'what if' questions if I call the police what will happen? Will social services take my children from me? Can I get benefits? Can I move out and get a new home?

People want answers to their questions to enable them to make informed choices that are right for them.

Key Themes emerging from the Needs Assessment Process

<p>Understanding and Identification of Domestic Abuse: There is a need for the development and implementation of a targeted domestic abuse training package to ensure earlier identification of domestic abuse by all professionals.</p> <p>Stalking and Harassment: there is a need to ensure professionals understand the behaviours, impact and risk associated and the legal tools and powers available to respond .</p> <p>Capacity: Should current trends continue; it is projected that the Knowsley Community based Domestic Abuse Services will receive a marked increase over the next four years.</p> <p>Victims with protective characteristic: There are low numbers of known victims with protective characteristic's reporting or accessing support due to domestic abuse.</p> <p>Referral Pathways: Most referrals are from Merseyside Police. There is a need to increase referrals from other services including those from early intervention services and the voluntary, community and faith sector.</p> <p>Safe Accommodation: demand outstrips supply resulting in victims waiting for a house move unless they are at immediate risk.</p> <p>Cross Border Support: The majority of victim's accessing refuge are from outside of Knowsley allowing for victims to come into the borough. Victims can also move across the city region via the current dispersed accommodation model.</p>	<p>Sanctuary Schemes: Most victims remain within their own home and receive support from community based domestic abuse advocates. There is a need to review how this is resourced and the accessibility of target hardening provision across the borough.</p> <p>Moving On: Moving on from temporary safe accommodation can be challenging and there is a need for more focused support in this area.</p> <p>Complex needs: There has been an increase in complex needs of clients from both community and accommodation-based support services.</p> <p>Financial Support: Victims are struggling to access private safe accommodation due to financial issues such as rent arrears, need for guarantors and practical support.</p> <p>Improved joint working and approaches is crucial to prevent victims having to repeat their account to different services repeatedly.</p> <p>Early Intervention and Prevention with children is an area for improvement and development with the provision of age-appropriate responses.</p> <p>Safe Accommodation Support for Children: There is a need to ensure that those children accessing non-refuge-based accommodation provision are supported appropriately.</p>	<p>Responses to perpetrators: There is a need to improve the awareness and purpose of perpetrator change pathways and increase the use of all partnership legal tools and powers available to hold perpetrators to account.</p> <p>Domestic abuse and suicide: Improved trauma informed approaches across practitioners is required to be equipped to respond to risk of suicide. To achieve this, it is essential to improve pathways and collaborative practice between those working in mental health services and domestic abuse support services.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Priorities 2022-2025</p> <p>The Needs assessment and consultation process has highlighted key areas for development if we are to achieve our Vision for Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board have agreed the following priorities based on information gathered via the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment, professional insight sessions and user voice feedback in 2021.</p>
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8. Priorities

Priority 1: Equipping the workforce to understand and respond to Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control

What did we find out?

Recent Knowsley Domestic Homicide Reviews, The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2021 and the strategy insight sessions have identified that there is a need for the partnership to focus on 'getting the basics right' both in terms of service provision, training, and workforce development, with an immediate focus on:

- The need to establish a better, more consistent understanding of the signs and impact of domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment across the workforce and volunteers.
- Increased understanding of the patterns and behaviours utilised by perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- The referrals to domestic abuse advocacy service illustrate that there are many services, organisations and sectors not utilising the domestic abuse referral pathway, as such opportunity for some victims to access specialist support may be being missed.
- The link between mental health, suicide and domestic abuse is evident, as such there is a need to ensure practice in Knowsley is based upon trauma informed responses

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board support the view that all professionals should be equipped to identify, recognise, and respond to domestic abuse and coercive control. It is important that professionals are aware of the range of support available, from early intervention to crisis stage. As such there is a requirement for all frontline practitioners to access training to understand the dynamics and the signs of domestic abuse and ensure that they have a clear understanding of the pathways to appropriate and specialist support for victims, children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

How will we achieve this?

- Establishment of a Multi-Agency Workforce Development Group to work and respond to the training needs across all the Knowsley partnership boards and priorities.
- Identify the multi-agency training needs across the workforce and develop appropriate training packages relating to domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment and other interrelated areas.
- We will work with our voluntary, community and faith groups to implement a sector led domestic abuse awareness plan.
- Improve the workforce awareness of the pathways to domestic abuse support.
- Training to support the development of trauma informed responses and interventions.
- Implementation of targeted specialist training as identified by the workforce development group including specialist training to understand how we can improve our response to communities and victims with protective characteristics and complex needs.

Priority 2: The victim voice and community engagement processes are central to the development of Domestic Abuse Strategies and Responses

What did we find out?

Through the development of the Needs Assessment and Strategy process it was established that there are positive areas of user voice and community engagement however, the co-ordination and shared learning across the partnerships is an area where we seek to improve.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We need to establish co-ordinated and effective processes across the partnership to ascertain the user voice (victim, child, and perpetrator) so that services can be responsive to need and reflective of the lived experience of victims.

How will we achieve this?

The voice of the victim at the centre of all our interventions - when we receive feedback, we will listen, and hear what is said and consider how we can respond.

- Implement an effective process to ensure that the voice of the victim is represented at The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and Operational level.
- Establish a domestic abuse user voice and participation worker to liaise across the partnership and co-ordinate opportunity to seek user feedback and victim voice.
- Establish a multi-agency user voice and participation plan for the borough and ensure links are made with other boards and organisations to share best practice and opportunities relating to user engagement.
- Engage with victim-survivors about their experience of accessing local services, this will inform improvements across agencies.

Priority 3: Interventions respond to the lived experience of victims of Domestic Abuse, are victim led and trauma informed and include specialist domestic abuse advocacy support.

What have we found out?

Knowsley has a positive partnership response and commitment to supporting those impacted upon by domestic abuse and to effectively interventions must be victim informed. We know that for some victims there may be other barriers and intersectionality's impacting on them or preventing them accessing support, this could be a disability, financial issues, substance recovery needs, a hidden/unknown learning need, cultural barriers, language barrier or interventions that are not responsive to our LGBTQ+ communities. Our needs assessment has also highlighted the low number of male victims coming forward to access support.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

Our aim is to ensure that every known victim open to specialist domestic abuse services, regardless of risk level, is offered holistic and appropriate support at the right time for them and considers their lived experience and other intersectionality's.

Our responses need to seek to work with victims to reduce the risk, repair the impact of the harm, highlight their strengths, and support them to regain their control. our responses need to be trauma informed and free from prescribed timescales

- With the support of our “by and for” partners, the Knowsley offer needs to be reviewed so that we ensure that we are providing appropriate support services to all victims of domestic abuse and that we are responsive to those who identify as having protective characteristics. This will include reviewing our service responses and accessibility to victims who identify as being disabled, have a learning disability, or need, those from Black and Ethnic Minority Groups and those who are LGBTQ+
- Most of the referrals to our victim services (community and safe accommodation support services) are for women however there is a need for the partnership to review the awareness, accessibility, and interventions to support men who are victims of domestic abuse. Our awareness raising of domestic abuse support pathways needs to ensure that male victims feel confident in accessing support and that our interventions are reflective of their needs
- Considering the current and projected referrals by 2025, we want to make sure that we have continued capacity to respond to the issue of domestic abuse within our specialist non-accommodation-based advocacy services provision.
- Our victim offer should be a holistic response, when possible, enabling co-location models and joint delivery/support between a wider variety of specialist services providing support for complex needs.
- We want to prevent victims having to continuously repeat their account of their lived experience to agencies.

Priority 3: Interventions respond to the lived experience of victims of Domestic Abuse, are victim led and trauma informed and include specialist domestic abuse advocacy support.

How will we achieve this?

- We will ask victims what support they want, what they need, and we will listen to what they say, and we will ask them to tell us what the impact has been following intervention.
- Align service responses to domestic abuse so that victims have the confidence that services are working **with them** to identify their strengths and preventing institutional re-victimisation.
- Ensure victims are aware that they have a choice to access provision from either specialist council or independent specialist domestic abuse services.
- Interventions will reflect need rather than timescales; the partnership will work together across services to ensure support is readily available including to those without recourse to public funds.
- Services for victims will be holistic and responsive providing trauma informed support across multiple complex needs (housing, mental health, substance recovery, employment, health, and mental health).
- Our services will be reviewed, and action taken to ensure that they reflect the needs of male victim's.
- We will invest within our practitioners to ensure that they are equipped to respond – this includes interventions with those victims with protective characteristic's such as those who identify themselves as disabled, have a learning disability or need, those from Black and Ethnic Minority Groups and those who are LGBTQ+.
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators and give victims full credit for their protective efforts.
- The recommendation of domestic homicide reviews (local, regional, and national) will be acted upon, and services and responses reviewed.
- We will implement consistent and robust service evaluations and performance models across the partnership
- A multi-agency intervention group will be established to review operational practice, identify gaps, areas for development and good and emerging practice within domestic abuse.
- Early Intervention models will be implemented and reviewed to determine the impact of early intervention and prevention approaches.

Priority 4: Implementation of early intervention and prevention responses with children as victims of Domestic Abuse

Given the complex nature of domestic abuse, a multi-agency response is critical to identify victims and their families at an early stage and before reaching crisis point. Multi-agency working enables professionals to get a better understanding of the needs of the victims, including children and young people, and the risk posed by the perpetrator. A multi-agency early intervention approach will enable professionals to work together to respond to risk and need without waiting for the abuse to escalate.

What did we find out?

Participants from across partner organisations highlighted some of the gaps around support for children and young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. Concerns focused on the fact the service offered for children and young people was not sufficient in responding to the trauma that young people can often face in the aftermath of domestic abuse, and neither was the service appropriate for every child, particularly younger children.

Participants relayed that they hoped that services could be improved, paying particular attention to the age of a child, and developing interventions which are age appropriate. Similarly, many participants recognised the often-inter-generational nature of domestic abuse and felt strongly that there needs to be a more concerted focus on delivering healthy relationship and educational programmes to children from a much earlier age.

A recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care and Targeted Services identified some areas for improvement in relation to our response where Domestic Abuse is a factor. To ensure children's outcomes and experiences are improved and risk is managed well further work is required on the issues below.

- Improve the quality of assessments and plans
- Improve the quality of the initial risk analysis by workers in MASH to demonstrate they have a good understanding of the nature of risk posed to children where Domestic Abuse is a factor
- Improve Safety Planning to ensure we are not placing the responsibility on the victim/survivor to take action to protect their children.
- Improve engagement with perpetrators to ensure meaningful actions are in place to bring about change.
- Evidence the impact on children both when analysing risk and when measuring progress to demonstrate children's experiences are improving.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We need to listen to children and identify and respond to the early signs that domestic abuse is impacting on them, and we need to embed an early intervention focus on preventing the impact of domestic abuse on children. There is a need to review the offer to children in both Community and Safe Accommodation Models so that learning is appropriately identified to ensure that the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved.

Priority 4: Implementation of early intervention and prevention responses with children as victims of Domestic Abuse

How will we achieve this?

- Through targeted training we will equip professionals to identify the signs of domestic abuse and feel confident to respond to the needs of children impacted.
- The voice of the child, as a victim is obtained, listened to, and acted upon and is central to all assessments and intervention plans.
- Children at risk, and who are exposed to domestic abuse are effectively supported through age relevant interventions including one to one support and group work interventions – in both Community and Safe Accommodation Models.
- Recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences on mental health in children and young people, increased therapeutic and trauma informed targeted support to those children impacted upon by domestic abuse.
- Delivery of age-appropriate healthy relationships programmes to children within educational based provision to work to prevent and reduce the risk of future incidents of domestic abuse.
- The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Advocate within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to support safeguarding process at contact and referral stage.
- Align service responses to domestic abuse so that victims and their children have the confidence that services are working with them to identify their strengths and preventing institutional re-victimisation.
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators as parents and give victims full credit for their protective efforts.

Priority 5: Respond to the safe accommodation housing and support needs of those victims and children impacted upon by Domestic Abuse

What did we find out about our Safe Accommodation Models?

The greatest area of safe accommodation support is provided in the form of Sanctuary Support by community-based provision in Knowsley. Many victims wish to either remain in their own accommodation or move within borough or within the wider Merseyside area.

Knowsley has a Women's refuge which enables the borough to respond to the needs of women within in borough and those from outside of the area, most victims accessing the Knowsley Refuge are from outside of the area.

The number of victims requesting a house move to a registered social landlord property due to domestic abuse outstrips the current supply and victims can wait between three and six months for a managed house move through The Property Pool Plus Housing System. **If they need safe accommodation immediately, they will be offered temporary accommodation on the same day.**

When assessed for housing needs, the geographical location of the perpetrator is a key area for consideration and can result in a victim being offered a property away from their family and support networks. Though the risk associated by the perpetrator is a key assessment factor so is the need to consider the increased risk of moving a victim away from their established support networks.

There are limited numbers of refuge accommodation spaces which are accessible for victims with a physical disability. The data captured through the needs assessment relating to domestic abuse victims and the demographic illustrate very low numbers of victims with disabilities accessing domestic abuse support services. This may be reflective of our level of knowledge in relation to the needs of this cohort group and the awareness and opportunity for a victim with a disability or indeed a learning need to disclose, or report abuse rather than the actual level need. There is a need to review the safe accommodation offer to ensure that we can respond to victims with physical disabilities and individual learning needs.

There is no dedicated domestic abuse accommodation or support provision for LGBTQ+ victim-survivors and / or male victim-survivors however safe accommodation support services can be accessed via temporary accommodation or via the dispersed accommodation model.

Priority 5: Respond to the safe accommodation housing and support needs of those victims and children impacted upon by Domestic Abuse

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

Knowsley has a Women's Refuge, at times when it is at capacity, victims may not be able to access refuge accommodation. When this occurs the victim and her children would be offered temporary accommodation in borough if safe and appropriate to need. The priority for the borough is to increase our safe accommodation offer in terms of the types of safe accommodation models available to victims of domestic abuse. The current dispersed accommodation project will end in March 2022 and there is a need for the borough to commission a new dispersed model.

There is a need to ensure that the Sanctuary Scheme is supported via the statutory grant so that more victims can continue to be supported to remain in their own home or resettle elsewhere in the borough. There is no dedicated domestic abuse safe accommodation for LGBTQ+ victims or male victims in Knowsley, however, safe accommodation can be accessed via temporary accommodation or via the dispersed accommodation model. The needs assessment illustrates low numbers in relation to LGBTQ+ victims and male victims referred for safe accommodation however, this may reflect a reluctance to disclose or seek support due to domestic abuse rather than the lack of need. Both these areas of need require more in-depth analysis to be undertaken and improved community awareness implemented by The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

How will we achieve this?

- Victims (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. This includes using all multi-agency legal tools and powers to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.
- Continue to deliver the Sanctuary Response across the borough and re-commissioning of future dispersed accommodation model.
- The Knowsley Women's Refuge Provision has been commissioned until 2025, with an option to extend, ensuring longer term sustainability for this provision.
- Review the current temporary accommodation units to determine if some can be dedicated as safe accommodation units for domestic abuse victims in line with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Quality Standards.
- Work with social landlords to ensure that domestic abuse continues to be classed as a breach of tenancy conditions so that perpetrators can be held accountable and potentially evicted as part of a multi-agency response.
- Work with landlords to raise awareness and recognise the signs of domestic abuse for example continuous dis-repair which can result in a recharge to the victim.
- Consider the communication process across the partners so that the early identification of properties where property damage and repairs indicate that abuse is present, and that specialist domestic abuse advocacy support is offered.

Priority 5: Respond to the safe accommodation housing and support needs of those victims and children impacted upon by Domestic Abuse

Safe Accommodation Support Services

Domestic abuse safe accommodation support services include the expert help provided to victims by specialist staff in domestic abuse safe accommodation support services. In Knowsley, some of this support is directly provided by staff on site (e.g., within refuges), whereas other support will be provided to victims through a support worker visiting them in their own homes through the use of sanctuary schemes. However, in all cases, support is offered to victims who reside in relevant safe accommodation.

What did we find out about Knowsley's Safe Accommodation Support Needs?

Professionals who engaged in the consultation process outlined their concerns about the risk of a victim returning to a perpetrator if housing and tenancy support is not put in place at the earliest opportunity. Across the workshops, the need for practical assistance – such as providing funding to buy furniture and bedding help to overcome dis-repair costs or rent arrears, tenancy support, or sanctuary support was viewed as a crucial part of the response.

Alongside this, practitioners talked about how domestic abuse victims often feel 'de-skilled' due to the level of control and isolation they have experienced. As such, workshops identified the need provide opportunity for personal and social development as a way of boosting confidence and recovery work, so that victims feel equipped to cope alone without the perpetrator.

Domestic abuse is a key area of need for those referred to Knowsley Councils Housing Solutions Service. On discussion with partners internal and external it has been identified that an improved knowledge of domestic abuse within the Housing Solutions Service would enhance the offer to those impacted upon by domestic abuse. This would enable an improved and specialist response to victims and their children, ensure safe practice, and increased capacity to respond.

Resettlement and move on from safe accommodation can be a point in time when the risk increases and when stress and anxiety can develop. Without an appropriate level of support victims may be more vulnerable and targeted by their perpetrators. Knowsley does not currently have this dedicated resettlement function, and this would increase the offer and response to those impacted upon by domestic abuse.

There is a high prevalence of mental health needs of victims that access the domestic abuse safe accommodation and support services which is not currently being met due to demand outweighing supply. Community Based Advocacy provision (providing Sanctuary Support Services) and The Knowsley Refuge Service have reported an increase in the complexity of the needs of women and children accessing support or entering the refuge, this has been pre and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The complexities include increased support for mental health, alcohol and substance use, English as a second language and abuse with high-risk cases.

The take up of Therapeutic/Counselling Support Services by victims of domestic abuse is well utilised and is an area of support for many victim/survivors require as an aid to recovery. However longer term holistic, wellbeing and trauma led practice and therapy approaches is a gap in provision at the moment and experiences pre and post the start of the pandemic has demonstrated an increased number of clients with complex needs.

There is no dedicated domestic abuse safe accommodation support provision for LGBT+ victim/survivors, those who identify as being disabled, those with a learning needs or male victim/survivors in Knowsley.

Priority 5: Respond to the safe accommodation housing and support needs of those victims and children impacted upon by Domestic Abuse

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

There are no dedicated domestic abuse safe accommodation support services for those victims with protective characteristics such as LGBTQ+ victims, those who identify as being disabled, those with a learning need or those from ethnic minority groups, in addition there is no **dedicated safe accommodation support service** for male victims in Knowsley. However safe accommodation-based support services can be accessed via the dispersed accommodation model. The needs assessment illustrates low numbers in relation to both LGBTQ+ victims and male victims however this may reflect reluctance to disclose or seek support due to domestic abuse rather than the lack of need. Both these areas of need require more in-depth analysis to be undertaken and improved community awareness implemented by The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

The complex needs of victims referred for safe accommodation support has increased and there is a need to identify, assess at an early point and respond to such needs and other intersectionality.

How will we achieve this?

- Increased awareness raising to ensure that domestic abuse victims know how to access safe accommodation and support options.
- Workforce development to improve professional understanding of domestic abuse, safe accommodation, and avenues of support available.
- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will work to continuously review the safe accommodation service provision needs of those domestic abuse victims with protective characteristics.
- The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Advocate within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to support safeguarding and ensure specialist domestic abuse support at point of contact.
- Establishment of domestic abuse advocacy support within housing services to ensure victims and their children's safe accommodation and support needs are appropriately assessed.
- Increased sanctuary and resettlement support will be established to enable victims to remain or return home safely and/or move into alternative permanent accommodation.
- Financial and practical resource scheme to be established to offer additional support to those who have had to seek alternative safe accommodation due to domestic abuse.
- Establish domestic abuse complex needs support services across safe accommodations services including support for: Substance Recovery, Mental Health, Trauma led practice.

Priority 6: To hold those that cause the harm and perpetrate Domestic Abuse to account and ensure support and challenge through appropriate behaviour change programmes.

What do we know?

If we want to address the issues of domestic abuse we must challenge the behaviour, attitudes, and underlying issues that impact on people identified as controlling, abusive, and violent. The right interventions at the right time can stop abuse from reoccurring or escalating. By confronting perpetrators with both the consequences of the behaviour and starting to address the underlying issues that trigger that abuse we can work to prevent the impact on victim and children.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We want to deliver a victim informed approach to the perpetrator offer and make sure that perpetrators are appropriately challenged and supported to change their behaviour (at the earliest opportunity) providing a holistic response to the needs of those perpetrators who cause the harm.

We need to continue to work with our partners to extend the support to domestic abuse perpetrators in areas of group work provision, substance misuse, education, employment, and mental health support services.

Where perpetrators refuse to change their behaviour then partners will work together utilising all legal tools and powers to hold perpetrators to account. It was recognised that all partners need to work more collaboratively to deliver a shared vision in respect of interventions which hold perpetrator to account and enable victims the opportunity to move seamlessly through services. For example, joint police and advocate role in the delivery of Domestic Abuse Disclosure Schemes such as Clare's Law.

Priority 6: To hold those that cause the harm and perpetrate Domestic Abuse to account and ensure support and challenge through appropriate behaviour change programmes.

How will we achieve this?

- Improve the awareness of the domestic abuse perpetrator responses and pathways to increase the number of earlier referrals routes.
- Ensure that perpetrator responses and interventions are victim centred – with the key aim to reduce the risk to victim and children (when present).
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators and give victims full credit for their protective efforts.
- Continue to develop the case management model to offer support and challenge to those perpetrators who cause the harm.
- Review the learning from “The Choices Pathway” to determine the impact of the provisions of holistic wrap around interventions.
- Ensure partners continue to share appropriate information regarding risk of perpetrators – to work to keep victims and children safe.
- Statutory and non-statutory perpetrator responses to work together to align response, share good practice and resources and when needed co-ordinate transition from statutory-non-statutory intervention (vice – versa).
- Work with partners to identify appropriate early intervention and prevention models and healthy relationship programmes with children and young people.
- Develop and deliver age-appropriate behaviour change programmes with those 16–21-year-olds identified as causing harm.
- Ensure that there is a clear understanding of the multi-agency legal tools and powers available to keep victims of domestic abuse safe and prevent further harm.
- Establish a safe process so that police officers know how and when to refer perpetrators to non-statutory interventions such as “The Choices Pathway”.

Priority 7: Work with the partnership to develop and implement Employee Domestic Abuse Workplace policy and support across the borough

Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies and Support

One in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. This means it will be likely that all workplaces will have staff who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, as well as those who are perpetrators. In 2018, the Knowsley Council Sustainable Borough Scrutiny Committee reviewed the delivery of domestic abuse services in Borough., they made recommendation for the development of Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions Schemes across the borough and the development of policies for those employees impacted upon by domestic abuse.

In 2019 The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership requested that all partners support the development of Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies to support those impacted upon by domestic abuse. To take this forward, in 2020 the partnership accessed the specialist training from the Merseyside Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions Scheme delivered and funded by The Merseyside Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board recognises the key role that employers play in ensuring that any employee affected by domestic abuse can access help to end the abuse, receive support and to be enabled to continue in their employment. It is essential that working environments reflect the ambition of the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy and encourages practice that delivers against this and the other priorities.

How will we achieve this?

The Council will launch the Domestic Violence and Abuse Workplace Policy in 2022 and undertake awareness raising across the workforce so that the policy is understood, and those employees impacted by domestic abuse are aware of the support available.

- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will review the current position of each partner in relation to their development and implementation of a policy.
- Links will be established with the Knowsley Chamber to establish the interest across the business community in establishing employee support schemes and support required to implement this.
- Knowsley is in a period of growth, regeneration and economic development seeing new businesses and homes coming to the borough – new business's will be encouraged to access the support to implement domestic abuse workplace policies and processes.
- Employers will be encouraged to access further Merseyside Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions Scheme training delivered by The Merseyside Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner.

Priority 8: To Increase the social and community awareness of Domestic Abuse and pathways to support within Knowsley

What do we know?

When living with domestic abuse a person or family can feel trapped, isolated, controlled, or feel like they are walking on eggshells all the time and that there is nowhere to turn for support. For some they live in silence afraid to speak out, afraid to access support through fear of what people may think of them or what services may do to them. The learning from domestic homicide reviews tells us that we need to do more to raise the awareness of domestic abuse across our communities, in Knowsley we want to change the culture and create a community when domestic abuse is socially unacceptable and that it is the perpetrators behaviours that need to change.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We want people impacted upon by domestic abuse to know that support is available and that they can access support at a time when they are ready, and we want those in immediate danger to know they can contact the police and other support services and they will respond. To do this we need to increase our community's awareness of what coercive control and domestic abuse is, what the signs are and how to access the pathways to support. During the COVID 19 pandemic Knowsley domestic abuse services reported an increase in third party reports to police raising their concerns for people impacted upon by domestic abuse as such we need to build upon this and ensure that we find the right way to talk with our communities about domestic abuse.

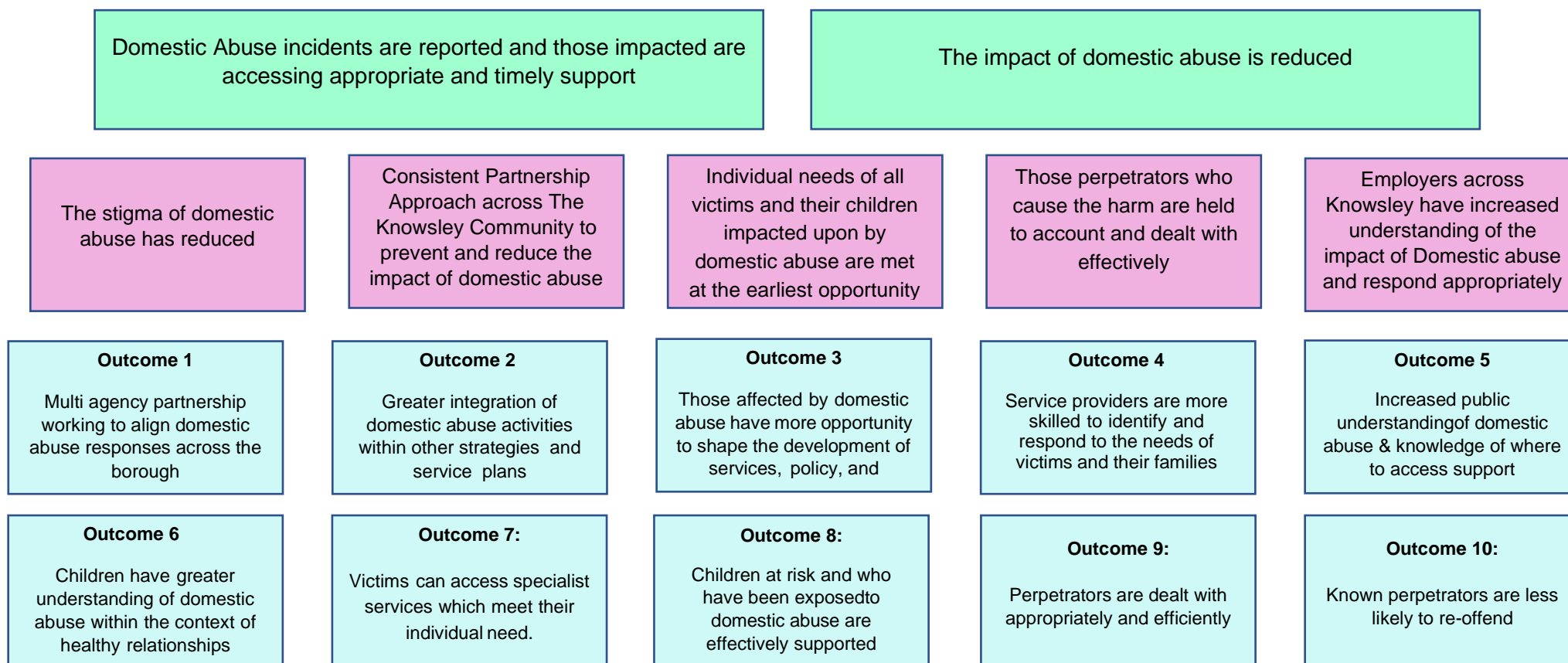
How will we achieve this?

- We need to engage with victim's, children, and their families to determine how can we best communicate our message about domestic abuse in a safe way.
- Development of multi-agency co-ordinated communication strategy to raise the community awareness of domestic abuse the impact and how to report or seek support.
- Take forward the principles of Knowsley Better Together and work to create a culture change – making domestic abuse socially unacceptable.
- We need to be seen in communities highlighting the pathways to support and we will work with “by and for” groups to identify how we can improve the pathways to support for those victims who have protective characteristics.
- Create safe communities where people feel that they can contact services including police to raise their concerns without repercussions.
- Delivery of training and guidance to Elected Members so they can respond to residents impacted upon by domestic abuse, re-assuring them that they will contact support services on their behalf.
- Work with our voluntary, community and faith sector partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse and pathways to support.
- Work with our Liverpool City Region Partners and National Partners to implement regional and national domestic abuse awareness campaigns.

9. Domestic Abuse Outcome Framework

The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will take responsibility to take forward The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Vision and eight Priorities identified within this Strategy on behalf of the Knowsley Community Safety Partnership. The Board will have the oversight of the coordination, offer and discharge of services and support to those who have experienced domestic abuse (victims and children) and the support, challenge/prosecution and rehabilitation of those perpetrators/offenders who cause the abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will implement this three-year Domestic Abuse Strategy and will hold partners to account to deliver the strategy through the development of a co-ordinated multi-agency action plan and performance framework to achieve the following Long-, Medium- and Short-Term Outcomes.



Multi Agency Partners will work together to achieve the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy



10. Advice and Support Services

<p>If you or anyone you know requires support relating to Domestic Abuse, please refer to the following advice and support services.</p> <p>In an emergency please always call 999</p> <p>Local Support Services - Monday –Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowsley Council Safer Communities Domestic Abuse Service: Tel: 0151 443 2610 or email: safercommunities@knowsley.gov.uk • The First Step (Specialist Domestic Abuse Service): Tel: 0151 548 3333: www.thefirststep.org.uk • Knowsley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: Tel: 0151 443 2600 (24 hours) • Knowsley Early Help Hub: Freephone helpline on 0800 073 0043 • Housing Support: Knowsley Housing Solutions Service: Tel: 0151 443 2333 	<p>Further support is also offered by these national agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • victimcaremerseyside.org (directory of services) • Women's Aid womensaid.org.uk https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/ • National Domestic Violence Helpline: Tel: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours). • National Stalking Helpline: Tel: 0808 802 0300 • Worst Kept Secret Helpline: Tel: 0800 028 3398. • Refuge (includes information for men) refuge.org.uk 0808 200 0247 (24 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karma Nirvana: (support for honour based abuse) Tel: 0800 5999 247 • Savera UK: Tel 0800 1070726 • The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327. • Mankind: Tel 018 233 34244 /www.mankind.org.uk • National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline Tel: 0800 999 5428. • Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123. • Childline: 0800 1111
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