



**WARRINGTON DOMESTIC
ABUSE PARTNERSHIP**

Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy

2018 – 2021

This document has been produced on behalf of Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership (WDAP) by Maria Guidera, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator

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1 Foreword

This Strategy sets out commitments and actions that all Partnership members will make to tackle domestic abuse in Warrington. Domestic abuse affects all aspects of lives; mental and physical health, work, learning and wider relationships.

The document summarises the reality, scale and impact of domestic abuse in the town. Our aim is always to prevent incidents happening in the first place, but when they do, to provide support that will keep people safe and wherever possible prevent any repeat incidents.

Service users, practitioners and partners have told us what they want to achieve and this strategy raises some challenges and presents realistic ambitions to tackle domestic abuse. With more focus on domestic abuse across communities, partnerships and within the media, there is a growing realisation of just how significant the issue is.

The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice are currently consulting on the government's approach to dealing with domestic abuse, views on the legislative proposals for the draft Domestic Abuse Bill and other measures. These include improving support services for victims of domestic abuse and their children; ensuring domestic abuse and its impact on children are taken into account in sentencing; and ways to help children and young people learn about positive relationships and educate them about abuse. We will be closely tracking these and other changes.

It continues to be a difficult financial position for all public services and as a partnership we will need to prioritise and respond with creativity and innovation to achieve efficiencies and support some of the most vulnerable members of our society. WDAP will continue to monitor and evaluate the priorities and objectives to be implemented over the next three years and will refresh the associated delivery plan on a quarterly basis.

The strategy highlights many challenges but also notes throughout some of the positive and even award-winning work that has happened and is continuing.

Steve Peddie

Chair of the Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership

2 Introduction and Context

WDAP is a strategic group which was formed to address domestic abuse issues through the collaborative working of voluntary and statutory agencies across Warrington. It aims to reduce domestic abuse and change attitudes by increasing the knowledge and understanding of the impact of domestic abuse across communities.

This strategy focuses on areas where there is a need for joint action and activities. It does not cover support, intervention, enforcement and recovery services for each agency. Its aim is to focus on areas for collaborative work that can add value and improve key outcomes and processes.

Scale of the Problem

The statistics below reflect the information that is recorded. Domestic abuse is acknowledged as hugely under-reported and often hidden. With this in mind the data reflects a mixture of local and national information sources. Often the presence of domestic abuse sits unreported behind the presenting needs of the individual. For example, domestic abuse and substance misuse often co-exist; women experiencing domestic abuse are up to fifteen times more likely to misuse alcohol and nine times more likely to misuse other drugs than women generally¹.

Findings from a Citizens Advice survey (A link in the chain: The role of friends and family in tackling domestic abuse²) in 2015 noted 'most' people in Britain do not feel equipped to help someone who is suffering from domestic abuse despite almost 1 in 3 people knowing a victim. The evidence of under-reporting and the uncertainty of those that may be able to offer help, are critical when considering the scale of the issue locally.

It is also important to note that the type and nature of abuse is changing. For example, modern technology is providing perpetrators with alternative and new ways to control, isolate, humiliate and dominate through the use of phones, social media and even Satnav.

¹ Stark, E. and Flitcraft, A., 1996; Maryland Department of Health, 2001

² Citizens Advice (2015) A link in the chain: The role of friends and family in tackling domestic abuse

National Data:

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be a victim in their lifetime, with women at greater risk of repeat victimisation, serious injury and fear³
- 1 woman is killed every 3 days and 12 men are killed in one year, by a partner or former partner⁴
- 1 in 5 children have been exposed to domestic abuse 1 in 5 teenagers has been physically abused by their boyfriends or girlfriends⁵
- Only 21% of victims report it⁶
- 30% of domestic violence either starts or escalates during pregnancy⁷
- Women and men with a long-term illness and disability were more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as those without and are therefore more vulnerable to it (Office of National Statistics, 2015).
- 95% of cases at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) or accessing an Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) service are women ⁵.
- The estimated financial cost of a Domestic Homicide Review is £1m
- An average high-risk domestic abuse case over a year costs £20,000⁸ and impacts on the following public services, in which health services feature prominently⁹:
 - 4 visits to GP surgery
 - 6 police call outs and involvement in violent incidents
 - 3 visits to hospital emergency departments
 - 1 appointment with mental health services
 - 1 visit to sexual health clinic
 - 3 criminal justice system prosecutions
 - 6 nights stay in refuge.

³ CAADA (2010) *Saving Living, Saving Money*. Bristol: Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Source: NSPCC and Department for Education 2016

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ McWilliams, M., McKiernan, J., (1993) *Bringing it out into the open: domestic violence in Northern Ireland*: HMSO, Belfast, 1993

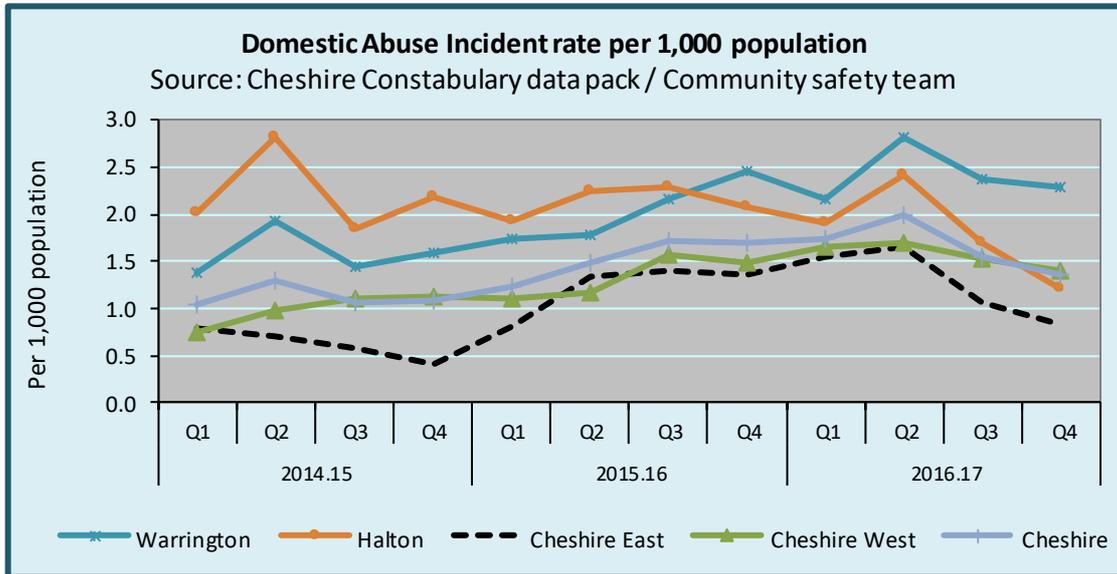
⁸ Walby, S. (2009) *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, Lancaster University.

⁹ CAADA (2010) *Saving Living, Saving Money*. Bristol: Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA).

Local Data

Warrington had the most significant level of reported cases of domestic abuse per 1,000 of the population in Cheshire during 2016/17¹⁰

Chart 1. Cheshire Domestic Abuse Incidents reported to the Police



Achievement Highlight - Refuge Accommodation Project

A government-funded Project is bringing added value and learning to the sub region from 2017 - 2019. Warrington is hosting the sub-regional Accommodation Project Coordinator and a Complex Case Worker based at Warrington Women's Aid. This will reduce the need to export victims out of the area by expanding the availability of specialist support provision. Vulnerable victims with complex needs can be offered support to enable them to be safe. The project will also skill-up the workforce and extend our dispersed accommodation offer by creating additional bed spaces across the area by expanding our work with Registered Social housing providers. The vision is to share good practice and highlight the most appropriate accommodation for individuals with mental health needs and/or substance misuse issues who are fleeing domestic abuse. This will lead to a consistent and coordinated support model for victims needing accommodation; improving the quality and maximising the use of available accommodation options.

¹⁰ Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner DA Report (2016/17)

National charity, SafeLives, advises that 10% of a specific female population will provide a reasonable estimate of how many women are affected by domestic abuse each year in any particular area. In Warrington there are currently 66,000¹¹ women aged 16 to 65 years and therefore we can assume that around 6,600 females are affected.

In 2016/17 Warrington Police recorded 2,000 domestic abuse incidents which as noted represents the highest rate per 1,000 of the population in the sub region.¹² This gives a rate per population of 9.6 for the year which is 18.5% higher than 2015/16 (1688). This increase is a concern but also welcomed as it is understood to reflect increased reporting in the context of historic under reporting of domestic abuse. Taken alongside other information it is an indicator that victims feel more confident to report to the police.

Achievement Highlight – Operation Enhance

In the aftermath of domestic abuse incidents, joint home visits from Police and IDVAs increased victims' confidence in services. Operation Enhance commenced in September 2017 as a nine-month Cheshire wide project. In cases where it is safe to do so, visits to victims of intimate partner abuse are carried out on Saturday, Sunday and Monday following incidents the night before. IDVAs attend with police officers in plain clothes and unmarked cars to conduct risk assessments, safety planning and explain the support services available to maintain safety for adults and their children. Superintendent Gareth Lee, Head of Criminal Justice and Custody for Cheshire Constabulary, is pleased to see victims continuing to engage with the IDVA service and being offered help with the next stage of the criminal justice process. *“Early signs are that Warrington has demonstrated excellent engagement rates and the findings of an evaluation will be published in 2018.”*

The speed of secondary response and the collaborative nature of Operation Enhance is important in improving victim engagement IDVA's report that the presence of the officer helped streamline the service they could offer and police felt they learnt from IDVA's expertise. Victims have also been positive about the support offered by Operation Enhance.

The following data also relates to 2016/17;

- 1077 referrals were received by the local community domestic abuse service including 137 Warrington Hospital referrals
- 79 women were accommodated with their children at Warrington Women's Aid refuge.¹³
- 48 families were referred to the voluntary perpetrator programme and 32 perpetrators completed the course
- 399 domestic abuse incidences were associated with substance misuse¹⁴

¹¹ ONS Statistics 2016

¹² Ibid

¹³ Warrington Women's Aid Contract Monitoring

¹⁴ Ibid

- 48 adults safeguarded during the period were suspected as having suffered some form of domestic abuse¹⁵
- Over 75% of all referrals to the community domestic abuse service are received from Warrington Police
- The cost of domestic abuse in Warrington is estimated over £20m per year based on a population figure of 101,000 16-59 year olds (male & female).
- Almost £2m cost savings were achieved by Warrington supporting MARAC cases¹⁶.
- 345 multiagency practitioners have been trained in basic awareness, asking the question, risk assessment and safety planning
- Over 200 MARAC cases involved children under the age of 5 years who were living with victims at serious risk of harm or homicide in 2016/17.¹⁷

User, Service and Agency Views

Critical in the development of any strategy is ensuring that the views and voices of those that have been or are affected, can contribute to its development.

Feedback to capture the voices of stakeholders is helping us to shape the future. Service users, families, practitioners and WDAP members have contributed in a number of different ways. Online and email questionnaires, focus groups and contract monitoring reports have all been considered when forming this position statement and forward plan.

Four broad themes have consistently been raised;

- Prevention and awareness
- Safety and Protection
- Specialist provision and
- Partnership working.

Specialist providers and partner agencies have echoed the 4 primary reasons for consolidation and development represented by service users. It is noted that if WDAP is to empower people to speak independently and more about their experiences and views on current and future services, resources will be required to develop and support a service user group. Enhanced activities will capture their views directly and feed into the implementation of this strategy.

¹⁵ Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board annual report 2016/17 the majority were females but a higher proportion of males than is the case with general domestic abuse statistics. Adults with care and support needs under the age of 65 are more likely to be subject to domestic abuse and in particular, those with identified mental health issues, followed by those with learning disability and physical health issues.

¹⁶ Safelives Sub regional Report 2017

¹⁷ Cheshire Police Domestic Abuse Data Pack (2012/13)

Achievement Highlight - White Ribbon Campaign Award

Men are also affected by domestic abuse but male violence and abuse towards women is shockingly prevalent in the majority of cases reported to the Police. Warrington White Ribbon Campaign is held each year in November and is successful in raising awareness of domestic abuse. We encourage men, women and young people to wear a white ribbon to show that they believe domestic abuse is wrong and should not be tolerated. Public sector organisations can often achieve so much more than individuals and WBC has been awarded accreditation as a White Ribbon Council.

Achievement Highlight – Engaging GPs

Warrington CCG requested a series of five half-day domestic abuse training courses for GPs and Practice Nurses during 2017/18. *“So far, 100 GPs and Practice Nurses have attended and feedback has been excellent. Not only has this initiative been successful in engaging GPs but it’s evident that the training has influenced their subsequent practice. The number of patients disclosing domestic abuse to their GPs has increased and they’re able to receive the necessary support from services commissioned by WDAP”.*

**Pauline Owen, Designated Safeguarding Nurse
Safeguarding Children and Children in Care, Warrington CCG**

“Absolutely amazing, insightful, moving and informative” GP


**Warrington
Clinical Commissioning Group**

3 Objectives and Priorities

This section of the Strategy sets out the overarching objectives and priorities for the joint approach in the next 3 years. Each links back to the themes summarised in section 2:

- Prevention and awareness
- Safety and Protection
- Specialist provision
- Partnership working.

The Strategy is informed by the vision of the national strategy which aims to shift the emphasis from crisis intervention to early help and prevention. Future legislation and policy development will be shaped by a landmark Domestic Abuse Bill consultation which sets out the government's approach to dealing with domestic abuse. The consultation is wide-ranging and aims to prevent domestic abuse by challenging the acceptability of abuse and addressing the underlying attitudes and norms that perpetuate it.

WDAP will prioritise the following objectives;

Safety and High Risk Protection	To provide a clear, standardised, multi-agency response to high risk domestic abuse with comprehensive referral pathways.
Effective Support	Ensure that early support and effective interventions are provided to the people who are affected by domestic abuse.
Prevention & Partnership Working	To provide a high quality, coordinated and comprehensive approach across partnership organisations to ensure abuse is prevented.

We will concentrate our efforts on priority areas and these are broken down into specific outcomes, objectives and actions to reflect a holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse as shown in our Delivery Plan in Appendix 3.

Priority 1: Safety and High Risk Protection

- Maintain access to services to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive
- Ensure support from a high-quality, well-resourced MARAC for victims at high risk including sensitive engagement with those from emerging and diverse communities
- Pursue and deter perpetrators

Priority 2: Effective Support

- Target support for victims with diverse and/or complex needs and in relation to female to male violence.
- Safeguard children living with domestic abuse and develop their resilience.
- Challenge and support for those who harm others to reduce the risk to the current victim and prevent abuse to future victims and children.
- Tailor recovery support for victims and their children.

Priority 3: Prevention and Partnership Working

- Promote public and professional awareness of domestic abuse
- Ensure victims and their families have the knowledge of how to get help for themselves – and/or what to do if someone tells them about domestic abuse.
- Ensure that universal services can appropriately meet the needs of people seeking support.
- Training for agencies to identify and support victims, their children, young people at risk and perpetrators in order for each member of the family to receive timely interventions
- Align commissioning budgets locally and regionally as appropriate to fund services according to jointly agreed outcomes that address risk and the needs of the local population
- Understand, monitor and improve performance to drive consistency in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas, agencies and sectors.

Achievement Highlight – Early Years Training

'Do You Feel What I Feel' is a toolkit which engages very young children who may be living with domestic abuse. A small investment allowed the idea to be developed by Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire Without Abuse and Barnardo's; each partner contributing expertise, time and commitment to the final product. The toolkit is delivered by trained early year's practitioners in private, voluntary and independent pre-school settings. It helps create a safe and natural environment for children to disclose any fears or concerns. 107 early years' practitioners were trained in 2017 to engage over 900 three and four year olds through the toolkit activities and to understand key safeguarding messages. Toolkit activities were incorporated into wider group activities and resulted in disclosures of domestic and sexual abuse from young children. This innovative project is recognised nationally and was shortlisted for the Children and Young People Now Awards 2017.



4 Implementation and Delivery

Central to the efficient functioning of WDAP is the contribution of all partners to the priorities and then investing in the activities and services to deliver the key areas.

This Strategy is deliberately overarching, setting out common (rather than all) areas and understanding. Commitments from key stakeholders to address domestic abuse across Warrington will be monitored through the agreed indicators and outcomes.

Our outcomes set out what difference we seek to make and we have put performance indicators against these.

The Strategy Delivery Plan supports each strategy objective with:

- Key outcomes
- Performance indicators
- Action necessary to achieve outcomes
- Timescales and resources
- Performance updates
- Names of agencies/partnerships that will be leading on particular areas

This will be refreshed quarterly and will provide partners with a framework for supporting those affected to enjoy their lives free from domestic abuse.

Achievement Highlight – Survivor Programmes

An increase in referrals for victims to attend the WBC Gateway Programme led to long waiting lists in 2017 and an urgent need to train more facilitators. Warrington Womens Aid nominated two members of staff to train as facilitators and extended their work into the wider community.

“Gateway helped me move on, I can do it, I know I can be safe with my kids.”

After completing the WINGS survivor group programme for IDVA service users, an evaluation found that mothers had much greater confidence in their parenting abilities and more awareness of the need to safeguard their children and keep themselves safe.

“I thought that domestic violence only happens to a particular type of person. I had no idea that it is experienced by pensioners, people in high powered jobs or those from different cultures. Being in a group helped me to stop blaming myself and realise who is actually responsible.”

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Strategy Delivery Plan will be reviewed quarterly by WDAP to:

- Monitor progress against targets and objectives
- Evaluate whether performance indicators are achieving the required outcomes
- Establish the overall impact and effectiveness of the Strategy
- Incorporate new legislation or government directives
- Reflect local and regional need and any other emerging priorities

Agencies/partnerships identified as leading on targets will provide information on performance monitoring against the delivery plan.

Achievement Highlight– Lifeline

“I was referred to the Voluntary Perpetrator Programme by my social worker even though I’d refused to accept that domestic abuse was an issue. My first point of contact was professional and non-judgmental. I’m getting a lot out of the group now and my children are being supported by the children’s worker”.
Perpetrator



**WARRINGTON DOMESTIC
ABUSE PARTNERSHIP**

Appendix 1. Definition

Both 'domestic violence' and 'domestic abuse' are referred to in this document and for the purpose of this Strategy, the following definition of domestic abuse applies:

Home Office Definition 2013:

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
- 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 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 assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

It is important to remember that most research also suggests that domestic violence occurs in all sections of society irrespective of gender, race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or educational level.

The definition does not cover violence by an under 16 year old against another family member

In Warrington, when the perpetrator is over 18 and the victim under 18, this is regarded as child abuse.

If both perpetrator and victim are under 18 years, consideration of the need for a child protection investigation to be undertaken would still be required but the national definition allows any abuse between 16 -17 year olds to be considered as domestic abuse.

A significant proportion of safeguarding adults work relates to the abuse or neglect of people with care and support needs who are living in their own homes. There is evidence that some professionals more commonly think about domestic violence between intimate partners but it can take many forms and be perpetrated by a range of people.

Where an adult domestic abuse victim also has care and support needs and as a result is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or experience of abuse or neglect, a safeguarding concern should be raised with the local authority.

Appendix 2. Current Specialist Commissioned Service Provision

Warrington Borough Council (WBC) is the lead WDAP agency for commissioning specialist provision. A comprehensive list of universal statutory and voluntary services supporting people affected by domestic abuse is available in Appendix 3. Key commissioned services comprise an independent community domestic abuse service, women's refuge accommodation and a voluntary perpetrator programme. Specialist services work well together and add value to their offer through a mixture of grant funding and charitable funds.

Warrington Independent Domestic Abuse Service

Free specialist advice, information and support is provided by Warrington Independent Abuse Service for male and female victims aged 12+ at all levels of risk. Of the 1077 referrals received in 2016/17, 526 clients engaged with the service and received;

- 1-1 and group work with emotional and practical support
- Intensive support to increase short, medium and long term safety
- Information and guidance on court proceedings and legal options
- Access to other specialist support e.g. refuge accommodation

Community Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate Role (IDVA)

IDVAs are specialist caseworkers working predominantly with high-risk victims, those most at risk of homicide or serious harm. IDVAs also mobilise multiple resources on behalf of victims by coordinating the response of a wide range of agencies that might be involved with a case, including those working with perpetrators and children. Warrington IDVAs co-locate at Warrington Hospital, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and with Warrington Police at weekends (Operation Enhance).

Outreach Worker Role

The Outreach Service provides support to individuals at standard to medium levels of risk and delivers WINGS, a group work programme for survivors who have been supported by the agency. Outreach can focus on delivering services to people who may experience additional barriers to seeking help; those from minority communities, disabled victims/survivors, older victims/survivors, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Young Person's Advocate Role

The Young Person's Advocate provides young people aged 12-17 with 1-1

recovery support following previous exposure to domestic violence and support for young people experiencing domestic violence in their intimate relationships. The support enables individuals to create and maintain safe and healthy relationships in the future.

Warrington Women's Aid Refuge

Women's Aid refuge is commissioned to provide 13 units of supported accommodation for women and up to 20 children from Warrington or other locations who are at high risk of domestic violence. The service provides access to staff Monday to Friday, 8am - 10pm and has dedicated out of hours support. Families are supported to recover through 1-1 practical and group work which enables them to move on to live independently. A Children's Support Worker is a qualified play therapist who promotes recovery in young children living in refuge so they can feel safe and protected.

Perpetrator Programme (VPP)

The National Probation Service (NPS) reduces the risk of harm posed by the offender via individual offence focused work and group programmes.

A behaviour change programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse (outside of those mandated by the courts) is delivered by Cheshire Without Abuse in partnership with Barnardo's. The Adoption and Children Act extends the legal definition of 'significant harm' to children to include the harm caused by witnessing or overhearing abuse of another, especially in a context of domestic violence.

The focus is on developing core skills for perpetrators to break the cycle of abuse and achieving the outcomes that victims want. Referral to Lifeline Voluntary Perpetrator Programme is via Children's Social Care for adult perpetrators of domestic abuse and their families. Dedicated support for children is available via a children's worker from Barnardo's. All referrals were subject to child protection at either Child in Need level, Child Protection or higher.

Gateway Programme

A specialist risk managed Gateway Programme supports people to recognise the dynamics of domestic abuse in a safe environment focusing on safeguarding parents and their children. It creates a warm, welcoming group delivered in WBC Children's Centres which focuses on reducing self-blame, denial and minimization. Service users are predominantly post relationship and at the recovery stage but the programme does take a small percentage of people who are living with an abusive partner.

Gateway promotes an active understanding of the dynamics of controlling relationships and where the responsibility for abusive behaviour lies. It increases understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on parenting skills and children's lives and helps victims consider potential early warning signs in new relationships.