

Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-22

Learning from the Former Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

The 2014-2017 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire contained **four outcomes** and **four objectives**:

Outcomes	Objectives
Prevention: to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse and to provide advice and guidance on healthy, respectful relationships	Victims of domestic violence and abuse are protected and live in safety
Provision of Service: to ensure that people affected by domestic violence and abuse have access to appropriate advice and services	Fewer children and young people experience domestic violence and abuse
Partnership Working: to ensure that partner agencies work together, taking a whole system and family centred approach to dealing with domestic violence and abuse	Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse control their behaviour
Criminal Justice: to ensure effective use of the criminal justice system in bringing perpetrators to account, as well as to ensure that victims are given the support they need on their journey through the criminal justice system.	Increased awareness of domestic violence and abuse, which leads to a culture where it is not accepted.

In the broadest sense, the outcomes detailed in the 2014-17 strategy remain current and aligned to national priorities. This is not indicative of any failures but recognition that the four outcomes are ongoing 'golden threads' to tackling domestic abuse.

When the learning is considered in more detail, analysis of the local action plan in relation to domestic abuse provides a fuller picture. The action plan was informed by both the former Domestic Abuse Strategy and a local domestic abuse needs assessment completed in 2013 (updated in 2017) and resulted in the following new or increased services:

- A new refuge building (9 self-contained units)
- Helping Hands and CRUSH programmes delivered to children
- Improved domestic abuse data recording across agencies
- A triage worker in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to support the flow of information

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- Ongoing support for families through Early Help and the Troubled Families Programme
- Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure domestic abuse victims have higher priority
- A specific worker within the Housing Solutions Team with specialist knowledge around domestic abuse
- A perpetrator programme, trialled in Herefordshire
- A draft multi-agency domestic abuse risk and referral pathway was created
- The creation of a Domestic Abuse Delivery Group to drive forward partnership working
- Implementation of 'Operation Encompass' where the police inform the MASH about domestic abuse cases and the MASH alerts the school.
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training has been rolled out to professionals.

The following actions remain outstanding:

- A specific local domestic abuse service for males.
The level of need for male victims remains poorly understood nationally. In Herefordshire the current local domestic abuse helpline provides initial advice to male victims and signposting to relevant local or national organisations. All organisations will be expected to raise the profile of male victims in order to encourage disclosures and build a more accurate picture of demand.
- Awareness raising and education for professionals and in the full diversity of Herefordshire communities.
People with protected characteristics and those living rurally are at higher risk of isolation. The revised strategy considers which tools are required to enable professionals to identify those at risk of domestic abuse and how respond to disclosures.
- Clarity around various assessments used and how they translate between services.
There is recognition that different assessment tools are used across organisations which is sometimes unhelpful in terms of understanding thresholds. The revised strategy includes actions around sharing of information, shared pathways and mutual understanding of roles and remits.
- Better information sharing arrangements between key agencies (substance misuse services, sexual health services, general health services, social care, schools etc.), including data protection considerations.

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Improvements are already underway with compulsory joint working across commissioned health services being written into service specifications. However, there is a recognition that information sharing becomes challenging where safeguarding does not apply and the revised strategy explores how information can be shared legally and proportionately.

The revised strategy considers the outstanding actions set-against the current national and local context. Since the former strategy was written in 2014, there has been a significant change to the way partners such as the police and health services deliver their services both strategically and operationally. Revising the strategy has provided the opportunity to review the way partners deliver services, ensuring there is a shared sense of purpose.

Additionally, learning has come from professional stakeholder engagement. It is clear that all organisations understand the risks associated with domestic abuse and the necessity to address the associated challenges collectively. It has also been recognised that a commitment from leaders across organisations is required to ensure the priorities and actions within the strategy are driven through to implementation.