



Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy

2021-2024

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Forward by Chair of Safer Walsall Partnership Cllr Garry Perry and Independent Chair of Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Sally Hodges

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Domestic Abuse (DA) affects a significant number of people in Walsall every day. Walsall Council has committed to ensure “*The most vulnerable are protected from avoidable harm, including caring for people in a safe environment and building Safer Communities*”. This document outlines how a co-ordinated agency and community response, underpinned by national legislation, will challenge the causes and effects of domestic abuse across Walsall.
- 1.2 The Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out the collective priorities of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group and the key areas of action for the next three years. This strategy aligns with the wider priorities identified within the national and regional Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategies.
- 1.3 The strategy builds upon the findings of the Walsall Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2021 and incorporates the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It recognises there is a need to develop a broader response to domestic abuse and areas for improvement and development.

Our Vision:

Is for Walsall to become one of the safest places in the West Midlands where domestic abuse is not tolerated whether at home or on the streets of Walsall.

Our ambition is to develop a co-ordinated, multi-agency and community response to end domestic abuse in Walsall.

Over the next three years we will work towards this vision by:

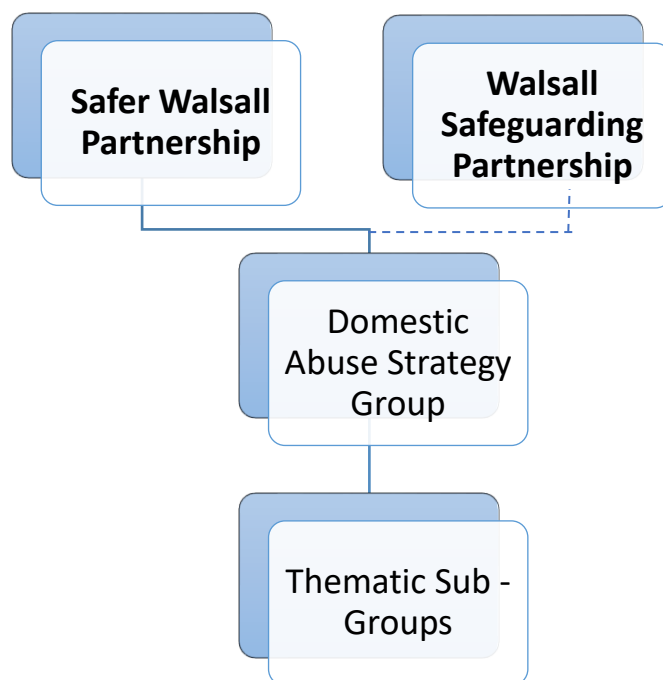
- Working in Partnership to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse
- Developing robust Prevention and early intervention approaches which reach everyone including those with protected characteristics
- Ensuring our support Provision are tailored and survivor led to meet the individual needs of every victims/survivor
- Ensure that our approach provides Protection to all those affected by domestic abuse and holds perpetrators to account

- 1.4 Partnership working and prevention is at the forefront of our approach to tackling domestic abuse, early identification and intervention to prevent people becoming victims and / or perpetrators in first instance is at the very heart of our partnership.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This Domestic Abuse Strategy provides a framework for delivery and is aligned to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This includes the categories of harm within the revised definition of domestic abuse and includes economic and financial abuse and coercive control, and recognises children as victims in their own right. Harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage (FM) and Honour Based Violence (HBV) are also included as, although they are distinctive forms of 'Violence Against Women & Girls' (VAWG), they also align with the definition of domestic abuse as the perpetrators are often family members.
- 2.2 The Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed following consultation with stakeholders across a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations delivering services for those affected by domestic abuse in Walsall. The consultation findings are woven into this strategy and provide considerable insight into what is required for Walsall to make the transition towards tackling all forms of domestic abuse.
- 2.3 Domestic abuse is a themed priority for Safer Walsall Partnership and for is 'business as usual' priority for the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership.
- 2.4 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, section 58, states that local areas must have a local partnership for domestic abuse. For Walsall this is the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which is a sub group of and reports directly to the Safer Walsall Partnership Strategy Board with specific consultation with Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (fig1 below).
- 2.5 No single agency is responsible for the delivery of our vision of ending domestic abuse. Through both statutory and voluntary sector partners working together with Walsall's communities we can obtain the best possible responses to domestic abuse and outcomes for those affected by domestic abuse.

Fig1. Domestic Abuse Governance



- 2.5 The Safer Walsall Partnership/ Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategic Board will monitor the incidents of domestic abuse across Walsall as required by the Domestic Abuse Act. This

data collection from across a range of service providers including Walsall Council, the Police, Health providers, commissioned and third sector services and Housing providers, will inform initiatives to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

- 2.6 Domestic abuse may be considered a learned behaviour which is reinforced by societal, cultural and institutional factors. Children growing up exposed to domestic abuse may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.¹ This is not an excuse. Domestic abuse is an intentional act by perpetrators who choose to inflict the abuse on their victims.

3. Purpose of the Domestic Abuse Strategy

- 3.1 The development of a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Walsall is, in part, a response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and that tackling domestic abuse is a key national policy area. However, it must also be recognised that in Walsall, as it is across the country, significant harm, damage, injury and deaths are caused to individuals, families and communities. domestic abuse is also a significant cost to the 'public purse' and so for all of the above reasons the Walsall domestic abuse strategy exists and will be the focal point to drive activity and action.

- 3.2 Domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable. It affects all communities and has an incalculable impact on the lives of those individuals affected, their families and the wider community. It is a form of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is recognised as a cause and effect of inequality.

- 3.3 The Strategy will identify and outline our key priorities over next three years. The Walsall Community Safety Partnership & the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership will oversee the development of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse where the wider community (all citizens) understand they have a contribution to make in tackling domestic abuse. The ambition of the strategy is that Walsall will be a safer place for all citizens and one where domestic abuse is not tolerated and will contribute to building safer, stronger and resilient communities where:

- Perpetrators will know that their behaviour will not be tolerated and that they will be held to account
- Victims affected by domestic abuse will feel able to seek help to live their lives safe from the impact of abuse.
- Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will be widely supported.

- 3.4 This Strategy will inform our delivery plans and has been informed by the Walsall Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment. The key messages from this assessment that will drive this strategy include:

- The importance of clear, robust multi agency strategy and leadership
- The benefit of joint commissioning of services
- Future commissioning should be service user informed
- Fill identified gaps in service provision
- The development of a strategic approach to tackling perpetrators
- Ensuring victims and perpetrators are signposted at point of contact and/or disclosure
- Engagement with communities and ensuring capacity building across communities to support their resilience
- Demand for services is high and likely to increase.

¹ Royal College of Nursing <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

- COVID19 has impacted all services ability to respond, and as a result there is a need to deliver services in different, more efficient ways
- The development of a comprehensive domestic abuse awareness training program tailored to specific service areas
- Develop a response to meet the needs that addresses the issues within diverse communities and groups.

4. The National and Regional Context

4.1 National Context

- 4.1.1 In 2010, the Government published the cross government strategy “Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls”² which detailed a series of action plans to address VAWG across all agencies. This has been followed by “The National Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, 2016 – 2021”.³
- 4.1.2 The Government strategy introduced a new National Statement of Expectations. The strategy reiterated the framework of prevention of violence, provision of Services, partnership working and pursuing perpetrators as the model to tackle all forms of VAWG including domestic abuse.

4.2 Regional Context

- 4.2.1 The Office for Policing and Crime (OPCC) published its draft strategic vision for protecting victims and improving criminal justice outcomes. The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner has committed to making Violence Against Women and Girls a key policy priority.
- 4.2.2 The OPCC funds a number of pan-regional services. This includes a community perpetrator programme and additional Independent Domestic Abuse/sexual Advocacy delivered through Black Country Women’s Aid.
- 4.2.3 The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has recently been introduced to tackle all forms of violent crime, for which delivery is overseen by the OPCC. The aim of the unit is to tackle the root cause of crime, including domestic abuse, by bringing communities and partners from criminal justice, public health and education together as part of a public health approach to tackling violent crime. The purpose of which is to:
1. Stabilise and reduce violence across the West Midlands
 2. Find the major causes of violence and co-ordinate action across the West Midlands to tackle them at scale, delivering a long term reduction in crime and associated harm
 3. Involve communities in the work of the VRU and build their capacity to deliver the best long-term solutions to reduce violence.

5. Local context - Domestic Abuse in Walsall

- 5.1 Domestic abuse in Walsall is a significant issue. The January 2021 ‘year to date’⁴ data presented by West Midlands Police for reported crime indicate there was a 36% increase (3,415 crimes) compared with the same period of the preceding year.

² <http://www.gov.uk>

³ <http://www.gov.uk>

⁴ ‘Year to date’ WM Police data January 2020 compared to data for January 2021

- 5.2 Many forms of domestic abuse are under-reported and many victims do not come to the attention of the Police or other services. However, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates 5.5% of all adults aged 16 – 74 experienced domestic abuse in the year to March 2020.
- 5.3 There is a robust multi-agency partnership working already in place with Safer Walsall Partnership which drives forward developments to tackle domestic abuse. This Partnership has developed the Walsall Domestic Abuse Forum, an arena for all support services to share best practice, share experiences and to identify ways to improve services to those in need. Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions, a scheme to support those in need of support within their workplaces in a confidential and supportive environment, has been developed and has offered support throughout the COVID19 pandemic, in particular for those based at home. This service continues to be promoted by the Partnership and to expand among employers.
- 5.4 The Family Safeguarding Model, originally developed by Hertfordshire Local Authority, is identified as a best practice model in the National Domestic Abuse Guidance Framework which has a track record on delivering significant improved outcomes for children and their families. Family Safeguarding is a whole-system approach to safeguarding children and young people. As part of the Department for Education’s Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme Walsall is in its second year of implementing this model. The approach places specialist mental health practitioners, domestic abuse workers, probation officers and children’s social workers together in a Family Safeguarding team to give direct help to parents. Adopting a whole family approach makes it easy for parents to access all the support they need from within one team, to help them deal with the complex issues of domestic abuse, mental health and drug/alcohol abuse that harm their lives and those of their children. Staff are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, a technique used to support behaviour change, tapping into the strengths and resources within the family and wider support network to ensure vulnerable children and families are safeguarded. It should be noted that these are not “stand alone” victim or perpetrator programmes but are integrated into the support for the family. There is a strong evidence base that this integration and multi-disciplinary approach is highly effective in supporting families and reducing harm.

6. Legislative Context

6.1 Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- 6.1.1 This strategy has been developed during a period where the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 was in the closing stages of its progress through the House of Lords towards Royal Assent. The Bill reached Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

The key aims of the Domestic Abuse Act are:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families
- Improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to account
- Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies

- 6.1.2 The Act introduces a new definition of Domestic Abuse (full definition at appendix 1), which now includes:

“Children as victims of domestic abuse”, and

“Abusive behaviours include:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse”

6.1.3 This new definition ensures the focus from violence to abuse is clear and recognises the importance of identifying children who are associated with abuse as victims and considering the care needed to support them.

6.2 Broader legislation

6.2.1 In recent years a range of new legislative measures have been introduced which provide a firm framework in the national drive to tackle domestic abuse. These include:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1999
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Crime and Victims Act 2004
- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014, which made it a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry
- The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (known as Clare’s Law) 2014
- The Care Act 2014, which included new duties to protect vulnerable adults affected by gender violence
- The Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015, which can be used to address the cross border issues linked to trafficking
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

6.3 Link to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: [Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 Legislation](#)

6.4 [Domestic Abuse 2021: Overarching Factsheet](#)

7. The Impact/Duties for local Partnerships

7.1 The new definition and legislation underpins the impetus to focus on domestic abuse nationally, regionally and within Walsall, throughout our partnerships. It also outlines some integral duties and impacts locally and nationally:

- Part 1: Cross – government statutory definition of domestic abuse
- Part 2: Creation of the role of Domestic Abuse Commissioner
- Part 3: New Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO) and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN)
- Part 4: Local Authority Support: Places duty on local authorities to provide support for victims and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- Part 5: Protection for victims, witnesses etc, in legal proceedings
- Part 6: Offences involving abusive or violent behaviour
- Part 7: Miscellaneous and general

A full breakdown of the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 on the Partnership can be found in Appendix 6.

7.2 This renewed focus will build on the already extensive work being undertaken in Walsall and ensure a long term sustained commitment from all key stakeholders to help stop domestic abuse.

8. Domestic Abuse and Inequalities

8.1 Domestic abuse is both a cause and consequence of inequality. It is a consequence of attitudes that underpin abuse and is deep rooted in all communities. This strategy acknowledges the intersectional nature of inequality and that many victims of domestic abuse experience multiple forms of abuse and inequality. Data from the Walsall Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment highlighted the gendered nature of domestic abuse with 79% of victims of all police recorded crimes identified as female. Nevertheless, this strategy clearly acknowledges and understands there are male victims and female perpetrators and that domestic abuse occurs in same sex relationships.

8.2 The Equalities Act 2010:

8.2.1 The Equalities Act 2010 has grouped 9 protected characteristics together under one policy strand. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The legislation places a duty upon Public Sector agencies and others who conduct public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.⁵

8.2.2 As a consequence, all forms of domestic abuse are recognized as a cause and consequence of gender inequality and are directly aligned to the Equalities Act. It is acknowledged that some individuals may have multiple protected characteristics which intersect and are impacted upon by race, gender, class, ability and ethnicity. While gender based violence can happen to anyone, anywhere, some women and girls are particularly vulnerable; for instance, young girls and older women, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, migrants and refugees, women from black and minority ethnic communities, and women and girls living with disabilities.

8.3 The adverse psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences of domestic abuse can affect victims at all stages of their life and contribute to health inequalities.

8.4 The Impact of Violence on Children:

8.4.1 Children are often the silent witnesses to domestic abuse. Although there are no official statistics on how many children are affected by forms of domestic abuse, the findings of recent research by SafeLives into the impact of domestic abuse on children has highlighted that “at the time they start school, at least one child in every class will have been living with domestic abuse since they were born”⁶.

8.4.2 The new definition of domestic abuse as cited in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 acknowledges that children and young people exposed to domestic abuse are victims in their own right. Walsall will ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse are, wherever possible, provided with support to deal with their experiences, and Walsall ~~xxx~~ will work with partner agencies to deliver programmes aimed at prevention.

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>

⁶ <https://www.safelives.org>. Children living with domestic abuse. Nov 2017

9. Domestic Abuse - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

- 9.1 Domestic abuse is a form of inequality and violation of human rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an expert body established to oversee equality issues for the United Nations adopted in 1979. Recommendation 19 of the Convention relates to all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and specifically requests “to consider family violence and abuse, forced marriage, dowry deaths, acid attacks and female circumcision as prejudice’s and practices that may justify gender violence as a form of protection or control of women”⁷
- 9.2 VAWG is defined as any act of gender–based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.
- 9.3 VAWG is the umbrella term which brings together multiple forms of serious violence and abuse under a single policy strand. This includes:
- Crimes committed in the name of “honour”
 - Domestic abuse
 - Female genital mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage
 - Sexual violence, abuse, exploitation and rape
 - Stalking
 - Harassment
 - Trafficking for sexual exploitation
 - Prostitution
- 9.4 It is important to note that these forms of violence are **not** discrete strands and that victims often experience more than one form of VAWG at any given time, or during the period of abuse. Some victims are affected by multiple forms of VAWG within intimate and/or family relationships whilst others experience of VAWG is perpetrated by the wider community.
- 9.5 A detailed description of each form of VAWG is available in Appendix 2.

⁷ <https://www.unwoman.org>

10. Priority Areas

10.1 This Domestic Abuse Strategy has identified four priority areas:

1. **Partnership:** Working in partnership to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse
2. **Prevention / Early Intervention:** Increase public and professionals understanding of the nature and impact of domestic abuse
3. **Protection:** Provide protection to all those affected by domestic abuse and hold perpetrators to account
4. **Provision:** Provision of services to support victims, survivors and their families

Priority One: Working in Partnership to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse

- Develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse for Walsall which aligns with the Domestic Abuse Act
- Continue to develop a “systems approach” to domestic abuse and improve standardised protocols for responding to it including the use of risk assessment tools and referral pathway
- Ensure relevant domestic abuse objectives are integrated into strategies and plans of all service agencies and services
- Build on successful networks and partnerships in Walsall that already exist such as Family Safeguarding . This will share the learning and increase the impact
- Work with all relevant partners to improve data collection to ensure:
 1. data is monitored
 2. continued development and improvement of responses
 3. delivery of services according to need.

This will underpin the transition toward delivery of the Domestic Abuse Act and toward the national and regional policy area of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) framework for delivery.

Priority Two: Prevention and Early Intervention: Increase public and professionals understanding of the nature and impact of domestic abuse

- Develop robust prevention and early intervention approaches which reach everyone including those with protected characteristics
- Develop a Domestic Abuse Communications Strategy for Walsall
- Develop an effective and tiered Workforce Development Programme for Walsall
- Develop and improve work with children and young people in schools and youth services to prevent domestic abuse and to promote gender equality
- Ensure that children and young people are informed about the support services available to them both as victims of domestic abuse or as young people experiencing/using domestic abuse in their own close relationships

Priority Three: Provide protection to all those affected by domestic abuse and hold perpetrators to account

Our consultation findings reinforce the knowledge that we will never tackle domestic abuse effectively until we work to change attitudes and provide perpetrators with opportunities to change their behaviour.

- Continue to develop and strengthen the coordinated approach to detection, arrest, conviction and effective sentencing of perpetrators in ways which protect victims and hold perpetrators to account
- Improve the response to perpetrators with multiple needs, particularly mental health and alcohol and substance misuse, by working with relevant agencies to combine the skills and knowledge of staff
- Develop and ensure delivery of opportunities for perpetrators to end their abusive behaviour wherever possible
- Interventions to focus on protection and support for victims and children
- Develop responses to young people using violence in close relationships
- Ensure that child contact and residence proceedings do not contradict child protection proceedings or undermine the safety of the victims and their children

Priority Four: Provision of services to support victims, survivors and their families

- Work with relevant partners to support survivors of domestic abuse with multiple needs or who face additional barriers which prevent them from accessing services.
- Ensure equal and fair access to information for survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Ensure that the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in relation to migrant victims are applied in future planning
- Ensure our support provision is tailored and survivor-led to meet the individual needs of every victim and survivor
- Reinforce existing and innovative models such as family safeguarding which impact on domestic violence and other systemic issues
- Undertake campaigns to highlight specific forms of abuse to the public
- Undertake awareness raising initiatives to ensure that survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses of domestic abuse know what services exist and how to access them, and to challenge assumptions about domestic abuse
- Improve and develop the work with children and young people in schools and youth services to prevent domestic abuse and promote equality

11. How we will measure success:

- 11.1 Whilst it is difficult to measure success beyond the vision of stopping domestic abuse, the list below indicates some specific areas we can measure to ensure we continue to effectively tackle the issue of Domestic Abuse in Walsall:

Reduction in the number of victims and repeat victims
Implementation of Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions
Ensure access to safe accommodation
Increased awareness of Domestic Abuse and the early signs of coercive control
Domestic Abuse Three Year Strategy that is clear and refreshed annually
Annual Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment to ensure fit for purpose commissioning and service provision

Appendix 1: Definition of Domestic Abuse, Domestic Abuse Act 2021

3.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has set out the legal definition of domestic abuse as follows:

- 1) "Domestic abuse" for the purposes of this Act.
- 2) Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- 3) Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:
 - a) physical or sexual abuse.
 - b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
 - e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;
- 4) "Economic abuse" means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to:
 - a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - b) obtain goods or services.
- 5) For the purposes of this Act A's behavior may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).
- 6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.
- (7) For the meaning of "personally connected", see section 2.

Section 2: Definition of "personally connected"

1. Two people are "personally connected" to each other if any of the following applies:
 - a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
 - b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
 - c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
 - f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
 - g) they are relatives.
2. For the purposes of subsection (1) (f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if:
 - a) the person is a parent of the child, or
 - b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

3. In this section:
 - a) “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
 - b) “civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;
 - c) “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989;
 - d) “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996

Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse

- 1) This section applies where behavior of a person (A) towards another person (B) is domestic abuse
- 2) Any reference in the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who:
 - a) Sees or hears, or experiences the effects of abuse, and
 - b) Is related to A or B
- 3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if:
 - a) The person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility or, the child, or
 - b) The child and the person are relatives
- 4) In this section:

“Child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the “Children Act 1989” (see section 3 of that Act);

“relative” has the same meaning given by section 63 (1) of the Family Law Act 1996

Appendix 2: Types of Violence Against Women and Girls

Area	Description
Violence Against Women and Girls	<p>It is acknowledged that VAWG is a form of inequality and violation of human rights. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1) was issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, it defines violence against women as:</p> <p><i>“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”</i></p>
Domestic Violence and Abuse	The UK government’s definition of domestic abuse is stated on page 7 of this document
Female Genital Mutilation	Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
Forced Marriage	<p>Forced marriage (FM) became a crime in England and Wales in 2014, and is defined as a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor (CPS, 2014). Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.</p> <p>In the cases of children under 16 and some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.</p>
“Honour Based Violence”	“Honour” based violence (HBV) is any act of violence which is committed by family or community member/s to defend their perceived honour. HBV is normally collectively planned and carried out by the victim’s family, sometimes with the involvement of the wider community. There is no specific offence of HBV, but it encompasses other offences such as murder, forced marriage, rape, forced suicide, acid attacks, mutilation, imprisonment, abduction, beatings, death threats, blackmail, emotional abuse, surveillance, harassment, forced abortion and abductions.
Prostitution	Prostitution describes the offering and provision of sexual services for financial gain. In the UK, prostitution itself is not illegal but there are a number of offences linked to it. For example it is an offence to control a prostitute for gain, or to keep a brothel. Prostitution has a close affinity with a host of other important social issues, in particular and health. Although there are exceptions, most prostitutes are women selling their services to men Research published in 2015 indicated that there were approximately 72,800 sex workers in the UK; 88% were women, 6% men and 4% transgender.
Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation	Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation covers a wide range of abuses and includes; child sexual exploitation; peer sexual exploitation; sexual violence experience by woman in prostitution ; woman who have been sexually exploited into prostitution; sexual violence linked to gangs as well as the wider spectrum of sexual violence experienced by woman and men.
Sexual violence and rape	Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. In the UK, rape is legally defined as the penetration with a penis of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person without their consent.

	<p>Sexual or indecent assault is defined as an act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, inflicted upon someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual</p>
Sexual harassment	<p>Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes you feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. It can take lots of different forms.</p> <p>Sexual harassment can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone making sexually degrading comments or gestures • your body being stared or leered at • being subjected to sexual jokes or propositions • e-mails or text messages with sexual content • physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances and touching • someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space, like at work • offers of rewards in return for sexual favours
Stalking	<p>The Legal Definition of stalking is: the act or crime of wilfully and repeatedly following or harassing another person in circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to fear injury or death especially because of express or implied threats.</p> <p>Repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment, causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include phone calls, texts and/or letter; damage to property, spying on and following victim.</p>
Trafficking/Modern Slavery	<p>The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, or coercion) for an improper purpose including forced labour or sexual exploitation. It also includes domestic servitude.</p> <p>Sex trafficking is a crime when women, men and/or children are forcefully involved in commercial sex acts. Worldwide, it's estimated that there are 4.5 million victims of sex trafficking.</p> <p>Domestic servitude is the seemingly normal practice of live-in help that is used as cover for the exploitation and control of someone, usually from another country. It is a form of forced labour, but it also warrants its own category of slavery because of the unique contexts and challenges it presents.</p> <p>Victims of domestic servitude may appear to be nannies or other domestic help, but the moment their employment arrangement transitions into a situation whereby they cannot leave on their own free will, it becomes a case of enslavement.</p> <p>Forced labour is any work or service which people are forced to do against their will, under threat of punishment. Almost all slavery practices contain some element of forced labour.</p> <p>Forced labour is the most common element of modern slavery. It is the most extreme form of people exploitation.</p>

Other Forms of VAWG	
Acid attacks	Usually involves sulphuric acid, a cheap and accessible weapon, which is used to kill and/or disfigure women. Commonly, acid attacks are in retaliation for family/dowry-related feuds, or rejection of a marriage proposal.
Breast ironing	A form of breast reduction, where at puberty breasts are flattened with a hot grinding stone, hammers, pestle for up to 2 months. Mothers do this to their daughters, aiming to protect them from rape and early marriage.
Dowry-related violence	A form of domestic violence, and involves violence and death associated with dowry demands (UN Women, 2012).
Faith-based child abuse	Physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect of children, linked to beliefs in five areas: (a) Abuse as a result of a child being accused of being a 'witch'; (b) Abuse as a result of a child being accused of being possessed by 'evil spirits'; (c) Ritualistic abuse which is prolonged sexual, physical and psychological abuse; (d) Satanic abuse which is carried out in the name of 'Satan' and may have links to cults; (e) Any other harmful practice linked to a belief or faith (Metropolitan Police, 2016).
Homi-suicides	This is when women are coerced or forced to take their own lives, through pressure from intimate and extended family. This is increasing, particularly in regions where there are severe penalties in place for HBV.
Image based sexual offending	Image based sexual abuse can also be referred to as 'revenge porn', non-consensual pornography or intimate image abuse. It is the act of sharing intimate images or videos of someone, either on or offline, without their consent. This crime can be committed by anyone, often the person responsible is an aggrieved former partner, but NOT always. You do not have to be in a relationship with the perpetrator for it to be considered image based abuse. It can be anyone who shares content without consent.

Appendix 3: Recommendations from Needs Assessment 2020

	Partnership
1	Governance: Walsall has recently formed a Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) which will provide strong leadership to ensure Domestic Abuse is “Everybody’s Business“ and ensure that an integrated approach to tackling domestic abuse is developed, modelling best practice principles. Membership should be sufficiently senior to drive implementation across service areas. A number of task and finish groups should be tasked to develop key areas of work.
2	Coordination: Improve the strategic coordination of domestic abuse and the wider VAWG issues through a programme management approach . Walsall will improve the coordination of local partnership and community service provision to develop closer working relationships and improved signposting of those affected by abuse. To comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021, all policies and procedures relating to domestic abuse will need to be reviewed and updated to ensure the legal statutory definition of domestic abuse is widely understood including coercive control and economic and financial abuse. This should also include policies for staff affected by domestic abuse. We will review the referral pathways and procedures across the partnership to ensure they are robust and reflect current legislation and best practice.
3	Strategy: Use the Needs Assessment as a basis for a new strategy to tackle domestic abuse (DA) and wider forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This should be developed under the thematic strands of prevention, provision, protection and partnership . Walsall will adopt the national best practice Coordinated Community Response Model to domestic abuse. The Coordinated Community Response Model (Home Office) https://www.ccrm.org.uk . This model acknowledges that no one agency can meet all the requirements of those affected by domestic abuse.
4	Data Collection: Data collection for domestic abuse is inconsistent across the partnership. It is a requirement of the DA Act that a Needs Assessment is undertaken every year and sent to the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. Data should be considered by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board to assess trends, and target resources. There are a number of improvements required to gather reliable data regarding the presence of an abuse in Walsall. The current format does not collect all relevant data allows multiple forms of domestic abuse are often “under reported “or hidden. Walsall will work with partners to disseminate the minimum data set required by the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for annual reports whilst retaining the option to expand on that dataset. This will improve our knowledge of the prevalence of domestic abuse.
5	Equalities: The findings of the needs assessment highlighted that there is underrepresentation of victims with protected characteristics across services. The client profile for Children’s Services and the Police recorded crimes show some variance. The recommendations of the needs assessment seek improved working with all those with protected characteristics.
6	Service Development: There is a need to develop a systems approach to domestic abuse whereby systems support staff to provide an appropriate response to disclosure and victims and perpetrators are identified and signposted. All policies and procedures across the partnership will require updating to ensure the new statutory definition of domestic abuse is widely understood including coercive control and economic and financial abuse. This should also include policies for staff affected by domestic abuse. A future approach should also consider young people as victims/perpetrators. A future service delivery model should consider increasing victim support at the point of attendance at incidents and increased capacity for ODOC to tackle repeat perpetrators as well a support for a Court IDVA to reduce recidivism.
7	To comply with national guidance. Walsall should publish Domestic Homicide Reviews

8	Housing : Consideration should be given to undertaking DAHA accreditation for a Whole Housing Approach and achieving Accreditation
	Prevention
9	One of the key findings from our consultation was the need to improve early identification of those affected by domestic abuse particularly those with protected characteristics. We will do this through ensuring individuals understand what domestic abuse is and capacity building with our communities to identify those at risk and raise appropriate alerts.
10	Walsall Council as an employer – we will continue/improve our response as an employer and ensure that victims and witnesses feel able to recognise and report domestic abuse and that any issues are dealt with appropriately.
11	Young people: Witnessing violence in the home, in their own relationships, or in the wider community can have a significant impact on young people ability to participate fully in school and achieve academically. We will explore the findings from the Family Safeguarding Model to inform how we work with children and young people and communities to reduce the harm caused by exposure to trauma.
12	We will expand the Community champions programme and link to VAWG.
13	We will incorporate the Foreign and Commonwealth Guidance on FGM, Forced Marriage, and Honour Based Violence into our service processes. We will ensure that the additional guidance relating to the heightened risk for Disabled and LGBT people are also embedded into practice.
14	Workforce development/Training: There is a need for an ongoing structured training program beyond basic awareness to be delivered across services in Walsall including multi-agency partnership training.
15	Communications: Raise awareness of domestic abuse across communities and within organisations. There should be a focus on changing the attitudes that underpin domestic abuse. Ensure public messages are periodically conveyed on social media for notable dates including White Ribbon, National Stalking day etc. Perpetrators of domestic abuse are responsible for their behaviour which is an intentional behaviour/choice. We will continue to work to change attitudes, inequality and misogyny that drive domestic abuse.
16	Health: Health services are in a strong position to identify domestic abuse at an early stage. The low number of victims recorded by Health services (with the expectation of IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety)) highlights that referral pathways and monitoring of domestic abuse outcomes do not align with NICE Quality Standards 2016. It is suggested that all Health Service update policies and processes in line with the Bill and NICE Guidance, 2014
	Protection
17	Risk Management: <i>Review the approach to risk management of victims of domestic abuse in Walsall by adopting the Safelives MARAC agenda.</i> This will provide a quality assurance framework aligned to the 10 principles of an Effective MARAC. Risk Management: Walsall MARC sits within the regional OPCC commissioned framework and is underpinned by the West Midlands MARAC Operating Protocol. This protocol takes guidance from SafeLives which incorporates some SafeLives guidance including the 10 Principles of an Effective MARAC. It will be necessary to review the approach to risk management of victims of domestic abuse in Walsall to ensure Walsall MARAC is following the West Midlands MARAC Operating Protocol.
18	Perpetrators: There is a need to improve the partnership response to perpetrators of domestic abuse to ensure perpetrators are held to account. There are limited interventions to disrupt perpetrators. A future service delivery model could consider increasing victim

	support at the point of attendance at incidents and increased capacity for ODOC to tackle repeat perpetrators. This may encourage victims to support prosecution.
19	We will continue to pursue perpetrators of domestic abuse through the criminal justice system
20	We will capacity build professionals to have a greater understanding of working with perpetrators, ensuring that support and safety measures are put in place to support change.
	Provision
21	Where possible we will ensure “ lived experience ” is incorporated into our response. We will ensure this by including stakeholder and services user’s in future consultations to inform commissioning and our future service delivery model.
22	We will revise our service delivery model to work across risk levels after conducting a full review of existing services
23	<p>Commissioning: Future commissioning decisions related to domestic abuse should incorporate the duties of the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill.</p> <p>Future service commissioning should have greater focus on multi agency interventions to address the complex set of vulnerabilities experienced by the majority of victims.</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service user lived experience • tiers of victim services across risk level including community based services • consideration of children as victims and the impact of domestic abuse on children’s outcomes • Community-based programs for perpetrators • There is an opportunity to improve the response to domestic abuse in Walsall by improving identification and signposting of domestic abuse victims who present at Sexual Health services targeting young people who may be gang associated, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT) community and those involved in sexual exploitation and prostitution • Expansion of Operation Encompass. The early intervention that Operation Encompass provides takes down those barriers to learning that domestic abuse creates. This should enable children to access their learning in school as their emotional health and wellbeing is being supported <p>The data highlights a significant disparity between the numbers of unique victims and the capacity of the current service provision to support the level of need in Walsall. In addition, 43% of victims using BCWA did not have children whilst 57% of victims did. Future commissioning must ensure there is support for victims without children across risk levels</p> <p>Children and Young People: There is an unmet need for services for children and young people. Although some young people affected by domestic abuse are identified and referred for support. In 2019/20, the number of children linked to MARAC was 618 compared to the 176 children and 32 young people supported by the commissioned service delivered by BCWA.</p> <p>There remains the issue of young people as victims and perpetrators of abuse that it would be desirable to factor into future service delivery models to manage current risk and long term repeat victimisation.</p> <p>Equalities: Develop a capacity building approach to engagement with groups with protected characteristics and hard to reach communities.</p> <p>Further work is required to ensure Walsall has a robust response to Harmful Practices to protect victims so that those affected are enabled to reach out for support and so that front line staff can identify Harmful Practices and that all cases are risk assessed and signposted onto appropriate responses.</p>

	<p>Perpetrators</p> <p>There is a need to improve the partnership response to perpetrators of domestic abuse to ensure perpetrators are held to account. In Walsall, there are limited interventions to disrupt perpetrators. A future service delivery model could consider increasing victim support at the point of attendance at incidents and increased capacity for ODOC to tackle repeat perpetrators. This may encourage victims to support prosecution. In addition, there is scope to develop an integrated programme of ODOC, Housing/Floating Support and behaviour change programme.</p> <p>The future service approach should also consider young people as perpetrators of their family and partners.</p> <p>A future service delivery model should consider increasing victim support at the point of attendance at incidents and increased capacity for ODOC to tackle repeat perpetrators as well a support for a Court IDVA to reduce recidivism.</p>
24	<p>We will target young people at the place they frequent including those using substance and/or sexual health clinics to ensure they are offered support in relation to domestic abuse issues.</p>
25	<p>We will consider developing a peer support programme in collaboration with our partners in the voluntary sector</p>
26	<p>We will develop a Domestic Abuse Service User Group composed of post crisis domestic abuse survivors who will function as the Councils critical friend.</p>

Appendix 4: Consultation Stakeholders

Jennifer Alder	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Sexual Assault and Abuse Services Coordinator,
Karen Bateman	Victims Coordinator, Walsall Council
Haps Bram	Refuge Manager, Accord Housing
Ian Billham	Interim Head of Community Safety, Walsall Council
Helen Billing	Family Safeguarding Programme Manager, Walsall Council
Gary Brookes	Director of Housing, whg
Carol Broughton	Head of Strategic Safeguarding, Walsall Council
Andrea Cooke	Commissioning Manager, Early Help and Corporate Transport, Walsall Council
Andrew Cooper	Programme Manager, Probation
Patrick Duffy	Programme Development and Commissioning Manager, Public Health
Debbie Edward Jones	Probation
Brian Fitzgerald	Consultation and Equalities Officer, Walsall Council
Donna Gyde	Head of Adult Safeguarding, Walsall Council
Emily Hurcomb	Detective Inspector an MARAC Chair, West Midland Police
Rashida Hussain	Homeless Strategy and Analyst, MHJ
Tracey Inskip	West Midlands Police
Julie Jones	Group Manager, Early Help and CSE, Walsall Council
Aisha Khan	CEO, A'aina Community Help
Shabnam Khan	Sexual Assault Referral Centre Manager
Helena Kucharczyk	Head of Performance, Improvement and Quality
Narinder Kooner	Executive Director, SWAN
Alison Larkin	StreetTeams, New Beginnings
Natalie Lau	(Acting) Regional Manager of the Black Country CRC
Maureen Lewis	Black Sisters Collective
Adrian Roche	Head of Social Inclusion and Public Health
Amardeep Sanghera	DCI Police
Surwat Sohail	CEO, Roshni
Raj Thind	BCWA
Peter Podrum	West Midlands Police
James Wall	Community Safety, WHG
Sarah Ward	CEO BCWA

Appendix 5: Glossary of Acronyms

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
BAME	Black Asian Minority Ethnic
BCWA	Black Country Women's Aid
CAADA	Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
CAHMS	Children Adolescence Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CICA	Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority
CSEW	Crime Survey England and Wales
CYPDAA	Children and Young Person Domestic Abuse Advocate
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour
DASB	Domestic Abuse Strategic Board
DAPO	Domestic Abuse Protection Order
DAPN	Domestic Abuse Protection Notice
DFE	Department for Education
EM	Electronic Monitoring
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Forced Marriage
FMU	Forced Marriage Unit
GP	General Practice
HA	Housing Association
HBV	Honour Based Violence
HMPPS	Her Majesty Prison and Probation Service
HO	Home Office
HP	Harmful Practices
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
IDSVA	Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocate
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocate
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Increase Safety
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans

LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Area
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
MHJ	Money Home Job
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NHS	National Health Service
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NSPCC	National Society for the Protection of Children
ONS	Office National Statistic
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court
SWAN	Sikh Woman's Action Network
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WHG	Walsall Housing Group
YPDA	Young People Domestic Abuse

Appendix 6:

Table 1. The Impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 on the Partnerships

<p>Part 1: Cross –government statutory definition of domestic abuse</p>	<p>Impacts all partner agencies. All training, policies, procedures and communications will require updating to reflect the new statutory nature of the definition and emphasis that nonviolent abuse such as economic abuse must be treated with the seriousness of the offence</p>
<p>Part 2: Creation of the role of Domestic Abuse Commissioner</p>	<p>Impacts all partner agencies. The Commissioner will have a role in monitoring the response of all statutory agencies/local authorities and will have the power to hold them and the Government to account for their response in tackling domestic abuse. Public bodies will be under a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner, and they and government ministers will be required to respond to each recommendation within 56 days.</p>
<p>Part 3: New Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO) and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN)</p>	<p>Impacts Police, Courts, HM Prison and Probation Service. There will be significant investment required in training police and courts to understand the new orders. An increase in protective order applications and criminal breach proceeding can be expected which will further increase the workload of the police and courts to respond and monitor for breaches. There are also potential costs to Police and HMPPS associated with Electronic Monitoring (EM) and enforcement of (EM).</p>
<p>Part 4: Local Authority Support Places duty on local authorities to provide support for victims and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation</p>	<p>Impacts on borough/district councils. The Act requires a broad variety of support in safe accommodation is provided (<i>as defined in the MHCLG statutory guidance</i>). There are clear expectations that cross border collaboration is employed to meet the needs of all victims including those presenting outside their locality. The Tier 1 authority will: convene and chair to make commissioning decisions; conduct needs assessment and produce a multi-agency strategy for delivery of a multi-agency strategy for delivery of safe accommodation; pass down adequate funding to Tier 2 authorities to fulfil agreed delegated commissioning requirements and report back to Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. Tier 2 authorities will have a duty to cooperate with the county Board.</p> <p>Local partnerships must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up an Domestic Abuse Board • undertake an assessment of local need • develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy • produce an annual report • send conclusions of Domestic Homicide Reviews to the Commissioner

<p>Part 5: Protection for victims, witnesses etc, in legal proceedings</p>	<p>Impacts Police and Courts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the civil/criminal and family courts. • Prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in a England and Wales <p>Impacts on the Courts. Screening, hearing a witness in private and removal of wigs and gown are expected to have a limited impact on the court. Costs to the courts associated with video cross examination and live link are uncertain may be an additional cost. There may be additional costs for other agencies including police and or rape support centers, who may need to offer video link where victims do not wish to enter a court, or from undertaking additional video recorded interviews.</p> <p>Funding of legal representation to will be required to prevent alleged perpetrators cross examine their victims. A system to monitor this process will be required</p>
<p>Part 6: Offences involving abusive or violent behaviour</p>	<p>Impacts on the Criminal Justice System. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>coercive controlling behavior</i> • <i>Disclosure of private sexual photos/films</i> <p>Offences against the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Non-fatal strangulation and suffocation</i> • <i>Consent to serious harm for sexual gratification is not a defence</i> <p>Offences committed outside the UK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extension of the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.</i> <p>The costs of this measure will impact HMPPS and will be associated with an increase in prison places. There will costs associated to transporting evidence, victims, witnesses and dependents to the UK, This will include costs of police/prosecutor gathering evidence overseas and an increase in prison places.</p>
<p>Part 7: Miscellaneous and general</p>	<p>Prosecution and management of offenders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Development of a national perpetrator strategy</i> • <i>Mandatory Polygraph testing as a condition of licence for high risk offenders on licence</i> • <i>Disclosure of information by the Police</i> • <i>Places the guidance supporting the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) on a statutory footing</i> <p>Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse is grounds for priority need

	<p>Secure Tenancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured short hold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy</i> <p>Impacts on borough/district councils and housing associations.</p> <p>The secure tenancies measures within the Bill will apply to tenants of local authorities and private registered providers of social housing (housing associations) in England. This is not a new requirement as local authorities already have a duty to grant secure tenancies to victims of domestic abuse through the Secure Tenancies Act 2018. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 is also amended in relation to homelessness in England to give homeless victims of domestic abuse priority need for accommodation.</p> <p>Medical Evidence of Domestic Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prohibition for charging for medical evidence of domestic abuse</i> <p>Impacts on Health</p> <p>Data processing for immigration purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review of data processing for immigration purposes</i> <p>Impacts on Border Agencies/Police</p> <p>Contact Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Report on the use of Contact Centres in England</i> <p>Impacts on HM Government</p>
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