

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2016-2019

DRAFT

Breaking the cycle



Foreword

Domestic abuse is unacceptable yet it continues to be a serious issue for many of our residents. It is estimated that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. More victims in Hertfordshire are coming forward to report abuse and demand on services for perpetrators is also increasing. Our services need to be responsive at the earliest opportunity, and balanced with prevention activities designed to stop abuse from happening in the first place.

The SafeLives review of Hertfordshire's domestic abuse commissioned services 2014/15 acted as a catalyst for change in the way that local partners work together to tackle domestic abuse. Although the review found some good practice in Hertfordshire, it was clear that partners and stakeholders could do more to improve the services in responding to the issue. Since then, a range of statutory agencies have worked together with representatives from housing and the voluntary and community sector to improve partnership working and decision making in tackling domestic abuse and protecting victims. A focussed improvement programme with support from SafeLives, and new governance arrangements were put into place together with a clear plan for the commissioning of domestic abuse services.

We want women, children and men in Hertfordshire to be kept safe from domestic abuse and have the opportunity to lead healthy and happy lives. We want to achieve this by;

- preventing domestic abuse from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.
- reducing the risk to victims ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and supporting them to change their behaviour.
- working in partnership to provide adequate levels of support where abuse occurs

This strategy sets out what we, as a partnership, want to achieve over the next three years. We want to better co-ordinate services based on individual need and risk, and put greater emphasis on prevention, sustained recovery and early intervention. We will do this by reviewing our services to ensure that they meet user needs, and offer the best value for money through joint commissioning and partnership working.

Domestic abuse is a complex and challenging issue which can wreck lives, and devastate families. No agency has single statutory responsibility for domestic abuse, and so it follows that the key to achieving our strategy lies in the hands of partnership working. Together we will break the cycle of abuse.



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Contents

Introduction.....	5
What is Domestic Abuse?.....	5
National Context	6
Hertfordshire Context.....	6
Strategic framework.....	8
Equality Statement.....	12
Our aims and plans.....	13
___AIM 1 – PREVENT	14
___AIM 2 – PROTECT	20
___AIM 3 – PROVIDE	27
Local commissioning priorities.....	35
Risk factors.....	37
Legislative framework.....	38
Appendix 1 – HM Government Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020.....	39
Glossary of terms.....	40

Hertfordshire strategic overview

Our vision

Women, children and men in Hertfordshire are kept safe from domestic abuse and have opportunities leading to healthy and happy lives.

Strategic Aim		Outcomes
Prevent	<i>Prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early where possible to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.</i>	Victims, perpetrators and their children are identified early by a wide range of frontline practitioners and partner agencies.
		Communities understand what domestic abuse is, and know how to respond.
		Increased reporting of domestic abuse to police and fewer repeat victims of domestic abuse each year.
		Victims and perpetrators are supported earlier with the appropriate level of support to break cycles of domestic abuse and overcome the impact it has on the lives of adults and children.
Protect	<i>Reduce the risk to victims, hold perpetrators to account and support them to change their behaviour.</i>	Children and young people at risk of harm are identified and referred appropriately.
		Victims are safer and have improved resources to remain safe.
		Victims have increased access to justice and perpetrators are held to account through the policing and justice system.
		Perpetrators of domestic abuse are supported to change their behaviour.
Provide	<i>Work in partnership to provide appropriate levels of support where abuse occurs</i>	Victims receive responsive services and well-coordinated service pathways, which support sustained recovery and mitigation of the risks of further abuse.
		All identified victims are offered an equally accessible service which meets their needs.
		Victims report improved health, wellbeing and resilience for themselves and their families.
		Demonstrable changes to perpetrators' behaviour and overall wellbeing

Introduction

The Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out our vision, aims and objectives for dealing with domestic abuse, and the outcomes we expect to see as a result. It includes our commissioning strategy for Hertfordshire which aims to assist agencies to deliver appropriate and joined up service responses for victims and perpetrators. It is vital that services are informed and developed by what victims and perpetrators say is important to them, and we want people affected by domestic abuse to play an active role in influencing design.

The key Hertfordshire priority groups intended to benefit from this strategy are:

- victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- children and young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse
- perpetrators of domestic abuse
- partner agencies involved in supporting adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse

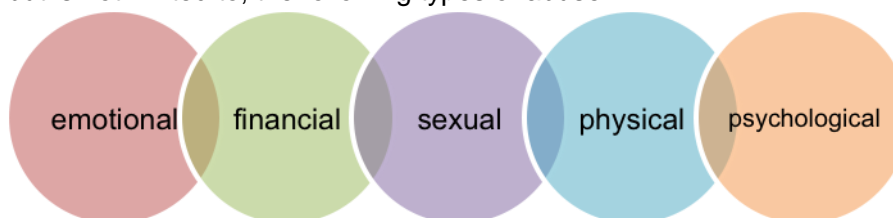
What is Domestic Abuse?

National statistics tell us that;

- domestic abuse accounts for 1 in 5 of all violent crimes
- one in four women and one in six men experience domestic abuse over their lifetime
- 1.2 million women and 700,000 men experience a form of domestic abuse every year
- on average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before receiving effective support

Home Office definition

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



Controlling behaviour 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 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 includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group¹

Whilst the government definition of domestic violence and abuse applies to young people aged 16 and above, it is critical to acknowledge that domestic abuse can have far reaching impacts on children and young people under 16 who are often caught up in the abuse carried out in the household.

¹ Home Office (2013) Information for Local Areas on the change to the Definition of Domestic Abuse
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf

National Context

Domestic abuse can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, and it occurs across all of society, regardless of age, race, religion, wealth or geography. The evidence for improving the response to domestic abuse is overwhelming;

Key statistics

Every minute, police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call – yet only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police ²

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men endure violence from a partner, ex-partner / family member during their adult life in England and Wales – equivalent to 1.2 million women and 784,000 men (16-59 years old) in 2012/13³

Between six and ten percent of women suffer domestic violence in a given year⁴

Victims of domestic violence are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than victims of any other type of crime

Two women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner⁵

Domestic abuse commonly takes place in a household with children and young people. We know that witnessing domestic abuse can be particularly traumatic for children. A minimum of 750,000 British children and young people a year (around 6.5%) are witnesses to domestic abuse and around 30% of domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy.⁶

Hertfordshire Context

This strategy is informed by the SafeLives review and the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) completed in 2015. Our key JSNA findings included;

1	The majority (79.6%) of known victims in Hertfordshire are female with the highest number of reports coming from those aged between 21 and 30
2	Hertfordshire has seen a significant increase in the number of victims aged between 61 and 70 and those between 16 and 20 over the three year period 2012/13-2014/15
3	Children were known to present in the house in 26% of all reported domestic abuse crimes and incidents in 2015/16, and recorded as a witness to the abuse in 14% of all reported domestic abuse crimes and incidents in 2015/16
4	Domestic abuse reporting peaks at weekends in Hertfordshire when support services for victims are often unavailable
5	The rate of domestic abuse per head of population in Hertfordshire is higher in areas of multiple deprivation
6	Hertfordshire Constabulary recorded alcohol as an aggravating factor in 25% of all

² Stanko, 2000 & Home Office, 2002

³ Ranford et Al 2012

⁴ Council of Europe, 2002

⁵ Homicide Statistics, 1998

⁶ Home Office 2010

	domestic abuse incidents in 2015/16
7	The average annual caseload for the Hertfordshire Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service is double the national recommended level (<i>January 2015</i>)
8	There is no on-going commitment or approach to services for perpetrators, and only one commissioned pilot perpetrator programme based in Stevenage

We have already responded to some of these findings by;

- expanding the perpetrator pilot programme across the county and establishing a *Perpetrator and Specialist Domestic Violence Court* working group to make recommendations on effective practice and provision
- increasing resources in the IDVA team to reduce caseloads, working more closely with the service provider to manage existing arrangements, and securing funding to expand the high risk service to victims in 2016
- working more closely with service providers to improve 'out of hours' access arrangements
- working with stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance services for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, with recommendations formally made to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

The JSNA makes a series of recommendations which we have used to inform the plans outlined in this strategy. These are;

1	All interventions for prevention and protection need to be based on evidence of what works, taking into consideration cost effectiveness, national and local research, to ensure that resources are targeted where they will make the greatest impact
2	Full participation of all key providers and stakeholders is necessary to ensure effective services, robust referral pathways and successful outcomes for victims of domestic abuse
3	Domestic abuse services need to be available and accessible for all levels of victim risk and potential harm
4	Services need to provide support for the whole family, in particular linked services for victims and their children
5	Commissioning arrangements should be underpinned by a clear commissioning strategy that is supported by key Boards and multi-agency structures to ensure services are targeted to reduce incidence, increase prosecution rates and address fully the impact on those affected
6	Formal multi-agency child protection arrangements must include attendance and participation of family members, local partner agencies and organisations, including child protection conferences
7	Domestic abuse provision e.g. IDVAs and refuges, need to be accessible at the weekend (peak times of reported offending)
8	Prevention and protection strategies and services need to consider targeting hot spot areas, including areas of deprivation
9	Formalised arrangements for direct referrals between domestic abuse services and sexual health, alcohol, substance misuse and mental health services need to be established along with assessment of need for further related service provision
10	Commission an IDVA service that meets national guidelines on safe caseloads to ensure

	the needs of Hertfordshire residents are met within the context of strategic priorities
11	Increase provision for perpetrators in Hertfordshire (based on level of risk and evidence of what works)
12	Domestic abuse information, advice and campaigns should be consistent across prevention, protection and service provision
13	Establish an outcome focussed performance framework with data collection specified in contracts
14	Facilitate ongoing involvement for people affected by domestic abuse in the development of the future strategy and commissioning approach
15	A strategic approach to training and development of professionals is required, including an approach for housing workers, so that all front line workers are able to identify the signs of domestic abuse and know how to respond.

Strategic framework

We used the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy to inform our local strategy and have put robust governance arrangements in place to ensure that agencies are held to account for its delivery. Our strategy is based on the findings of the SafeLives review and our local JSNA, and covers services for all victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. The new Government Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020 is reflected throughout our strategy and included as a summary in Appendix 1.

Vision, aims and outcomes

Our vision is that women, children and men in Hertfordshire are kept safe from domestic abuse and have opportunities leading to healthy and happy lives.

This is supported by the three key aims of prevention, protection and service provision.

We aim to;

- 1. Prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early where possible to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.*
- 2. Reduce the risk to victims, hold perpetrators to account and support them to change their behaviour.*
- 3. Work in partnership to provide appropriate levels of support where abuse occurs*

Our priorities (objectives) are to;

- Target work on education, training and earlier intervention to prevent domestic abuse from occurring, continuing, recurring or escalating
- Identify, assess and reduce risk to victims
- Protect victims via intervention
- Provide appropriate support for adults, children and young people suffering from domestic abuse, and also for perpetrators of domestic abuse, in order to end domestic abuse and overcome its impact

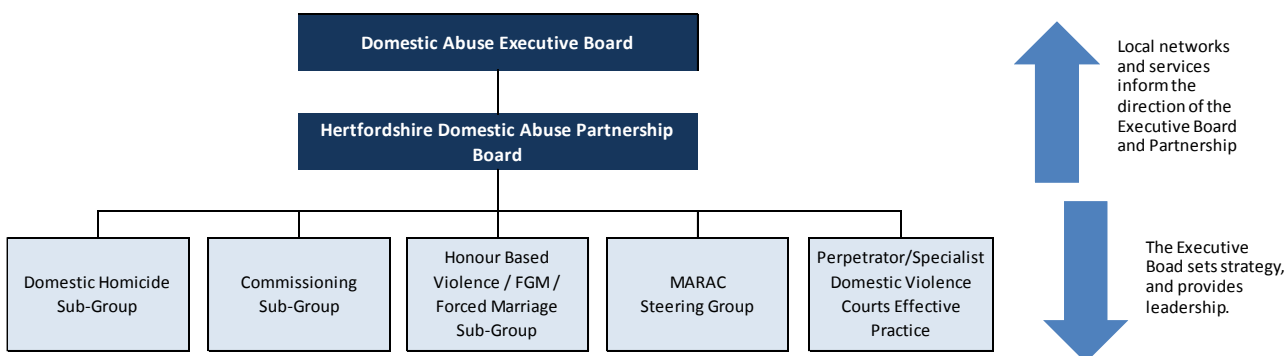
While the strategy is structured under three broad headings of prevent, protect and provide, these aspects of the strategy are interconnected, as the ‘virtuous circle’ diagram aims to illustrate. In particular, prevention encompasses not only campaigning and education but also the provision of services that intervene earlier in the trajectory of abuse. Crucially, at all stages of intervention, earlier and later, our services provision aims not only to protect and support but also to break cycles of domestic abuse. Our innovation is focused on understanding what works in breaking the cycle and on rolling out those solutions.

Through our work we want to achieve the following key outcomes;

Key outcomes	
1	Victims, perpetrators and their children are identified early by a wide range of frontline practitioners and partner agencies
2	Communities understand what domestic abuse is and know how to respond
3	Increased reporting of domestic abuse to police, and fewer repeat victims of domestic abuse each year
4	Victims and perpetrators are supported earlier with the appropriate level of support to break cycles of domestic abuse and overcome the impact it has on the lives of adults and children.
5	Children and young people at risk of harm are identified and referred appropriately
6	Victims are safer and have improved resources to remain safe
7	Victims have increased access to justice and perpetrators are held to account through the policing and justice system.
8	Perpetrators of domestic abuse are supported to change their behaviour.
9	Victims receive responsive services and well-co-ordinated service pathways, which support sustained recovery and mitigation of the risk of further abuse.
10	All identified victims are offered an equally accessible service which meets their needs
11	Victims report improved health, wellbeing and resilience for themselves and their families.
12	Demonstrable changes to perpetrators’ behaviour and overall wellbeing.

Governance and structures

We have improved our partnership governance arrangements in order to ensure that decisions about domestic abuse in Hertfordshire are better co-ordinated and prioritised. We introduced a new Domestic Abuse Executive Board in 2015 and established a number of supporting working groups to help develop strategy and deliver action plans



The direction of the domestic abuse strategy is set by the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Executive Board, and delivered via the Partnership Board and supporting sub-groups. The Executive Board is chaired by the Hertfordshire County Council Director of Children's Services and comprises senior directors from a range of agencies, and representatives from the housing, and voluntary and community sector. It is also responsible for scrutinising existing arrangements, and securing the funding necessary to ensure service user needs are met.

The Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is an operational board responsible for overseeing the delivery of the domestic abuse strategy and plans. The board is chaired by the Hertfordshire Constabulary Detective Chief Superintendent for Safeguarding and comprises the chairs of each of the sub-groups plus representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Districts and Hertfordshire County Council.

The Boards are currently supported by five (operational) sub-groups which reflect the main areas of activities in our plans. These are;

- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
- Commissioning
- Perpetrators/Domestic Violence Courts effective practice
- Honour Based Abuse

There are six Domestic Abuse Forums in Hertfordshire, some of which cover two Districts . These forums are district based and work at a local level to increase awareness of domestic abuse and improve services and responses. They provide an opportunity to bring together a mix of key leads and service providers from within each local community safety partnership working directly with those affected by abuse in order to inform local and countywide practice and partnership working.

The Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Action Group brings together the chairs of each of the Domestic Abuse Forums together with a range of key representatives from statutory, voluntary and community organisations and local specialist services. Its purpose is to share intelligence, knowledge and good practice to inform need and support local and countywide plans.

This network of domestic abuse professionals, across the public and voluntary sectors, is key to ensuring strategic direction and plans are informed by local knowledge and good practice. A strong and well-informed network is also crucial to ensuring that service users are offered astutely judged and well-coordinated pathways. Domestic abuse is complex. Which service is most appropriate for any particular individual or family can only be ascertained through informed professional judgment about the nature of the risks and needs in combination with a good understanding of the available services. Where the various public and voluntary sector agencies know about, understand and trust each other's services, they do already refer and introduce service users to the appropriate service yet gaps in knowledge can mean that opportunities are missed.

We will therefore work across the public and voluntary sectors to strengthen our collective understanding of risk and need, the different kinds of support available and how best to handle referrals, introductions and service pathways. The network needs to embrace not only specifically domestic abuse services but also other relevant services that have a different focus or label.

We are currently considering how the introduction of a champion's network model in Hertfordshire could further support these partnership arrangements, particularly with the voluntary and community sector.

Accountability

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Hertfordshire will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and ensuring that this work is effective. One of the board's key themes is around priority areas of risk to children and young people from domestic abuse and female genital mutilation.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) is a multi-agency partnership, as required by the Care Act 2014, with representation from the organisations and constituencies that work with and support adults at risk in our community. The HSAB is the key body for the coordination of the activity of the various organisations, statutory, independent and voluntary, in Hertfordshire to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of 'adults at risk' and for seeking assurance that this work is effective. One of the Board's strategic objectives is to raise public, professional and political awareness of the safeguarding adults agenda across Hertfordshire including awareness around domestic abuse.

The Health and Wellbeing Board brings together the NHS, public health, adult social care and children's services, including elected representatives and Hertfordshire Healthwatch, to plan how best to meet the needs of Hertfordshire's population and tackle local inequalities in health. The board has nine priorities, three of which directly link to preventing domestic abuse from happening and reducing the harm that it causes. These are;

- reducing the harm caused by alcohol
- helping all families to thrive, and
- improving mental health and emotional wellbeing

Some senior members of the Safeguarding Boards and the Health and Wellbeing Board are also members of the Domestic Abuse Executive Board. This helps to ensure that appropriate links are made between work areas, and domestic abuse is prioritised in plans.

Performance

We recognise that we have some way to go before we are fully able to monitor all domestic abuse services to ensure that they are as effective as possible. A substantial amount of data is collected about the services we provide but this is not necessarily done in a consistent way across agencies. We want to improve some of the processes and systems we use to collect data and are in the process of developing a new performance framework. We are working towards a new set of measures and indicators that we will use to determine whether our strategy and plans are proving successful and are in the process of determining a baseline, or starting point, for each area. A small task and finish group has been established to drive this area forward.

Equality Statement

This strategy acknowledges that domestic abuse can affect people regardless of factors including age; ethnicity; religion or belief; disability and sensory loss; sexual orientation; and gender. An Equality Impact Assessment in line with the Equality Act 2010 has been undertaken to inform the development of this plan and determine the impact and mitigations needed to provide equitable support for diverse groups. We have identified the following patterns in relation to specific groups most likely to be affected by domestic abuse either as victims or perpetrators;

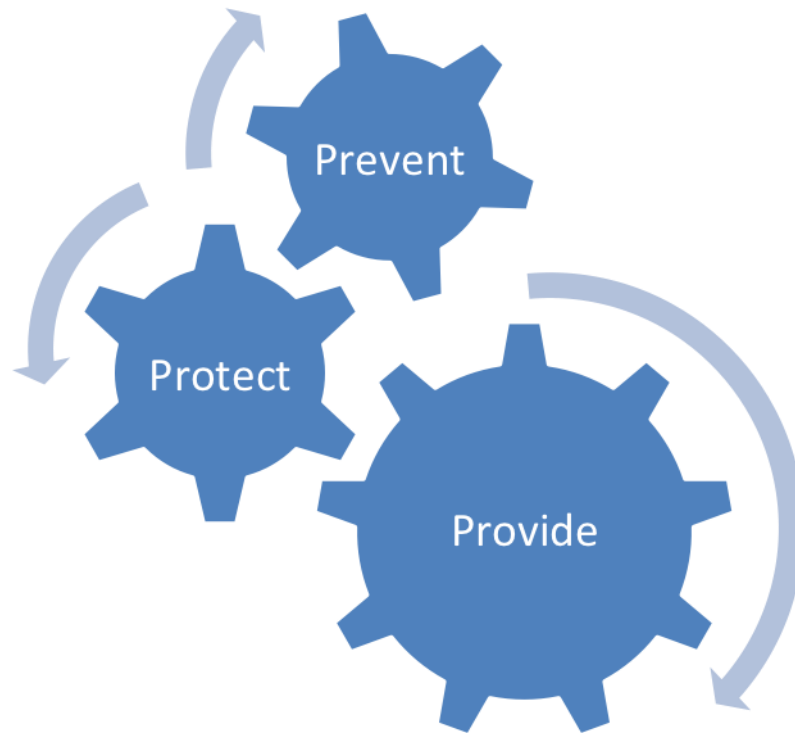
- the majority of known victims, 79%, are female
- the average age of all known victims is 36.5 years
- The percentage increase in known male victims is 82%.
- 84.3% of known perpetrators were male and the average age for perpetrators is 34
- the percentage increase in known female perpetrators over the last three years is 53%
- where known, the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators is predominantly White-North European
- there is generally under-reporting from a range of victims from different equality groups including but not limited to people with a disability, who are LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender), in a same sex relationship, or from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background.

The strategy recognises that domestic abuse:

- a) is generally under-reported, and that Hertfordshire encourages all those who are experiencing abuse to come forward. Therefore in the short term, increases in the reported level of domestic abuse could signify success in increasing disclosure and not necessarily an increase in actual levels
- b) data indicates that it is predominantly but not exclusively the abuse of women by their male partner or ex-partner. Hertfordshire will take account of this data when anticipating the volume of need while remaining committed to meeting the needs of all equality groups
- c) causes significant harm to children in the household and impedes effective parenting. Hertfordshire's response will therefore aim to strengthen partnership working between adults' and children's services to meet the needs of all family members
- d) also occurs between other family members
- e) services and pathways need to be developed and tailored to particular parts of society for whom there are obstacles to disclosure and to using the available services, such as male victims, female perpetrators, older people, the LGBT*Q community, those with disabilities and sensory loss and particular ethnic groups such as Traveller communities
- f) requires specific procedures and practices if it is to be tackled effectively

There are many different levels and types of domestic abuse and the people who experience abuse as victims or use abuse as perpetrators need to have an appropriate response, based on risk, needs and choice. The complexity of domestic abuse also means it is important not to assume that a 'one size fits all' response will suit all those within particular groupings (e.g. by gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc).

Our aims and plans



AIM 1 – PREVENT

To prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster it, and intervening early where possible to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.

Outcomes we want to achieve

- Victims, perpetrators and their children are identified early by a wide range of frontline practitioners and partner agencies
- Communities understand what domestic abuse is and know how to respond
- Increased reporting of domestic abuse to police, and fewer repeat victims of domestic abuse each year
- Victims and perpetrators are supported earlier with the appropriate level of support to break cycles of domestic abuse and overcome the impact it has on the lives of adults and children.

Outcomes for domestic abuse victims and perpetrators are better if the risk of, or actual, abuse is recognised quickly. Even though Hertfordshire has seen a steady and positive increase in reporting over recent years, many victims are often reluctant to come forward and the true extent of the problem is unknown.

Parental problems such as mental illness, alcohol and drug misuse, and domestic abuse are all known to increase the likelihood of children experiencing emotional abuse and neglect, particularly when they appear in combination. Where parents have complex multiple problems, including those arising from trauma in their own childhoods, earlier intervention needs to be sufficiently intense and holistic in order to break cycles of domestic abuse

and overcome its impact. This kind of intense and holistic work needs to be trauma-informed.

Intervening early, and recognising how domestic and sexual abuse impacts on different family members, is vital to stopping violence from escalating and reducing the harm to victims and their children.

Government will scale up approaches to ensure that this happens more widely and consistently, and that risk and need identification for all members of a family takes place at the same time.

The Government is aware of a wealth of innovative practice being developed at a local level to work with health, schools, and housing providers to identify and support victims and their families at an earlier stage and provide effective wrap-around support.

Abused women use health care services more than non-abused women and they identify health care workers as the professionals they would be most likely to speak to about their experience.

GPs, midwives, health visitors, mental health, drug and alcohol services, sexual health and Accident and Emergency staff are all well placed to identify abuse. They have the opportunity to intervene early and direct victims to the most appropriate statutory and non-statutory services. The new NHS Mandate recognises the vital role of the NHS in tackling abuse and violence and expects NHS England to ensure the NHS helps to identify violence and abuse early and supports victims to get their lives back sooner.

Sharing information about multiple needs is vital and we do this in a number of ways including through our Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and in our multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding Teams and more broadly through making effective use of the powers that exist to enable public

and voluntary organisations to share information.

We need to;

- Ensure that a core offer is in place across the County; communicated and understood by all partners.
- Clarify early help pathways for domestic abuse from information support and guidance to more direct interventions
- Support the use and development of evidence-based interventions which would support families to break the cycle of generational domestic abuse and the associated impact of trauma experienced in childhood then affecting adulthood and parenting
- Promote an understanding of delivery mechanisms for domestic abuse support across multi-agency partners
- Roll out risk assessment tools for those at risk of domestic abuse

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH brings together Police, Probation, Health Visiting and Children's Services staff, working together as a team, to share information and decision making about the best way to safeguard and meet the needs of vulnerable children in Hertfordshire including those experiencing domestic abuse.

The Hertfordshire MASH went live in July



2015 and deals with contacts and referrals sent by members of the public and professionals to Children's Services for a safeguarding response. Where the MASH team consider that the child's welfare will be better met by early help services, they will ensure referrals get to the most appropriate teams and will inform referrers the outcome of their request for a safeguarding assessment.

Learning, Development and Innovation

Victims of domestic abuse come into contact with a wide range of services, so there are many opportunities for public sector professionals to spot early indications of abuse. Intervening early to reduce violence and abuse against adults and children not only protects them from immediate harm but can have longer-term benefits such as reducing:

- the number of people requiring treatment for mental health problems such as depression;
- risky health issues such as alcohol and drug abuse and smoking, as well as obesity;
- gynaecological and sexual health problems;
- incidence of family breakdown;
- number of looked-after and missing children;
- incidence of teenage pregnancy;
- poor educational attainment and behavioural problems, absenteeism and school drop-out

Professionals in universal services cannot and should not replace the function of specialist services, but they do need to be able to understand, engage and think professionally about the children, young people and families they are working with. They need to understand the circumstances of families at the point they seek help, or

when they are identified as needing help whilst using a service (such as health or education services). People working with families, such as children's centre staff, teachers, social workers, doctors and healthcare staff, Jobcentre staff and housing professionals, who pick up on signs of domestic abuse need to have a clear route to signpost victims, perpetrators and children. These front-line staff need access to training which enables them to identify domestic abuse, spot the signs of any mental health difficulties arising from abuse, assist people to access further support, and help to prevent the cycle of domestic abuse repeating in future generations.

We intend to conduct a countywide, multi-agency workforce audit to aid development of training frameworks, core competences and improved training coordination across all business areas. To enable us to do this we are engaging with Learning and Development leads to formulate and better understand what the local Learning and Development landscape looks like and developing a tool for adoption and roll-out across the domestic abuse, safeguarding and Early Help multi-agency workforce throughout Hertfordshire.

The SafeLives Review encouraged us to 'build capacity for innovation, learning and development, so that Hertfordshire knows what works to stop domestic abuse and can roll it out.'

We will contribute to and learn from innovation in earlier intervention in working with families to break cycles of domestic abuse and to support individuals and families where domestic abuse is combined with other complex problems.

It is increasingly recognised, nationally and internationally, that there are gaps in currently available services and in the evidence base. Innovation by the voluntary and public sectors within Hertfordshire is

already helping to address these gaps and we will continue to support this.

We will

- raise awareness of domestic abuse and the support available to victims and perpetrators amongst professionals who work in universal services (such as hospitals, doctors and teachers)
- conduct a partnership wide training needs analysis
- understand, coordinate and quality check the training offered across Hertfordshire
- introduce outcomes for learning and development
- build capacity for innovation, learning and development across the partnership
- Work in partnership to understand, develop and replicate what works in earlier intervention to break cycles of domestic abuse

Case study: Healthy Relationships: Healthy Baby Programme – Stefanou Foundation

The Stefanou Foundation, a Hertfordshire-based charity, has invested its philanthropic resources to develop the innovative Healthy Relationships: Healthy Baby Programme (HRHB) and launched it in Hertfordshire. The programme offers expectant mothers and fathers the range of support they need to bring an end to domestic abuse, overcome trauma and give their babies the best start in life. The programme supports the family until the baby is two years old.

The design of the programme has been informed by the separate evidence bases of effective interventions for families, infants and children, for early and earlier intervention, for those who experience and

use domestic violence and abuse.

These evidence bases were brought together to build the intervention strategy, define the cohort who could benefit most, drive programme design and operational arrangements, identify the outcomes being sought and commission its evaluation.

A key facet of the HRHB model is the way it is integrated with, and embedded into, multi-agency services and systems. As one of the UK's two host localities for the first two prototype projects, Hertfordshire's local government, health, police and probation services have worked closely with the Stefanou Foundation to help develop the programme. The programme was launched in April 2015 and the Hertfordshire HRHB team are co-located with the Stevenage Thriving Families Team.

Our partnership with the Stefanou Foundation, together with the academic research evaluation of the HRHB prototype project should give us vital learning about working with whole families at an earlier stage in the trajectory of domestic abuse to break the cycle, overcome and avoid the impact of domestic abuse on adults and especially on children.

Case study: Police training

Hertfordshire police undertook significant training in domestic abuse via its pilot training program, domestic abuse matters - 25 days of action, provided through the national college of policing. During this training 1,400 Hertfordshire police officers were trained in Domestic Abuse. The aim was to get a critical mass of staff to create a substantial culture and attitude change and improve their skills to offer the best services to victims, offenders and their children.

Hertfordshire has trained 200 coaches to create a network of domestic abuse coaches who share best practice. Delegates were trained in coercive control, trauma bonding, perpetrator behaviour, evidence gathering, and safety planning.

The training received high praise from a breadth of people who attended. With the roll out of body worn video, officers can also record an initial account of the incident from the victim and, where appropriate, capture what has happened. The evidence is more graphic and can also be viewed by the court instead of reading a written statement.

Communications and awareness

Raising awareness of domestic abuse is essential to increasing confidence in victims and perpetrators to come forward to ask for support. We want to target work on education, prevention and training so that all residents experiencing domestic abuse, or likely to, understand what it is and know what to do.

One way to reduce the impact of domestic abuse is to educate and inform young people, preferably before they enter into a relationship. The raising of awareness for both boys and girls at an early age should also reinforce the unacceptability of any forms of abusive behaviour, which may assist in reducing the victims and perpetrators of the future and ensuring the future well-being of our young people.

Early years education providers including schools, colleges, and private, voluntary and independent suppliers have a crucial role to play in helping children and young people to develop healthy relationships, deal with their emotions and challenge the way in which some young people behave towards each other. Preventative work around domestic abuse in the school setting is important to reach the next generation early, to mould attitudes and teach young people that domestic abuse is never acceptable.

Our work to develop a Champion's Network will also see many individuals from a range of backgrounds trained to spot the signs of domestic abuse, and equipped with the knowledge to help refer and signpost those experiencing it.

We will

- continue to deliver domestic abuse campaigns across Hertfordshire to raise awareness
- maintain and further promote the Hertfordshire Sunflower services and branding e.g. website, helpline, drop ins, IDVA, and SARC services
- work with children & young people to provide information & general awareness through schools & other young people's services including the teaching of the importance of healthy relationships



Case study: Herts Sunflower

Hertfordshire has a large and varied number of services, to support victims. These services are collectively known as and represented by the overarching 'Herts Sunflower' branding across the county.

Herts Sunflower provides information and support services for everyone affected or concerned by domestic abuse in Hertfordshire.

Services include:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisers
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)
- Herts Sunflower Drop-in Services

The Herts Sunflower partnership is underpinned by the Herts Sunflower website, and the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline. The website – www.hertssunflower.org – is a ‘one stop’ shop of information about services and support available for victims, friends and families of victims, professionals and perpetrators of domestic abuse. The website has a directory of services and provides an online reporting facility, so that non-emergency incidents can be reported directly to the police or to an independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA).

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline –

08 088 088 088

- provides a free, confidential and sensitive resource service to those affected by or concerned about domestic abuse. It is currently staffed by trained volunteers from 10am-10pm, Monday – Friday. We want to expand the hours that the helpline is available in order to better meet service user needs.

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline

Many victims agonise on the question of seeking help and are often deterred from approaching the 'authorities'. The Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline was established 13 years ago by the County Community Safety Unit for this very reason, and the public link with 'the authorities' subsequently weakened by converting it into a Charitable Trust. The Helpline provides an easily accessible and untraceable point of contact for the victim or other concerned individuals or members of the family to voice their concerns and to seek help. There is no charge to the caller and crucially, the Helpline number does not show up on their telephone bill so they can, if they wish, remain anonymous and their cry for help kept secret.

The Helpline acts as the gateway to more than 200 services and can also direct victims needing urgent assistance to the IDVA service or a refuge.

The term 'gateway' is an apt description of our position between those who work and campaign to bring domestic abuse into the light, and those who provide support services to victims, create perpetrator programmes, and prosecute offenders. We also advise on the availability of services to workers and professionals who come into contact with domestic abuse. It is necessary work, as evidenced by the 6% increase in calls in 2014-15 over the previous year and our increasing need to use the services of Language Line as our communities continue to become more diverse. We are constantly looking to expand the service.

AIM 2 – PROTECT

Reduce the risk to victims and ensure that perpetrators are held to account and supported to change their behaviour.

Outcomes we want to achieve

- Children and young people at risk of harm are identified and referred appropriately
- Victims are safer and have improved resources to remain safe
- Victims have increased access to justice
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse are supported to change their behaviour.

We want to identify, assess and reduce risks for victims as early as possible, and protect victims by intervening appropriately when necessary. The safety of the victim is of paramount importance and it is essential that we have robust and consistent risk assessment processes in place, and that these are used as widely as possible.

We are keen to develop a family centred and consistent approach to effective perpetrator justice with clear, safe, and supportive mechanisms to ensure that the victim's voice is heard. A recent report by the Centre for Justice Innovation calls for greater use of specialist courts, including those focusing on domestic abuse. The Better Courts: a Blueprint for Innovation report⁷ notes that despite a 34 per cent rise in domestic abuse incidents reported to the police since 2007, victims are often reluctant to testify with many finding the system confusing and intimidating. The conviction rate of Domestic Abuse offenders

in Hertfordshire is around 74% which is similar to the national rate.

Whilst justice for victims of domestic abuse is essential, it needs to be delivered alongside appropriate support for perpetrators in order for them to change. Admitting there is a problem is a necessary but often difficult first step for many perpetrators. Once they have accepted that their behaviour needs to change, we offer support via perpetrator programmes and a range of intervention services.

We want to better understand what works and will set out our proposals for effective practice for perpetrators and the courts later this year.

Case study: *My Life – Watford Women's Centre*

'My Life' is a 10 – 12 week domestic abuse awareness and personal development programme for women who have experienced domestic abuse in their adult relationship. Typically a group will consist of up to fourteen women, and is led by two trained female facilitators (one of whom is a counsellor), and a crèche is ideally provided. Women can self-refer onto the programme or be referred by social workers, health visitors, family support staff, and GPs. The first step is usually a one-to-one appointment to assess current risk and suitability for the programme.

A combination of presentations, group discussion, individual and group exercises are used including Protective Behaviours and risk assessments. Women set their personal goals and have individual learning plans. The programme is evaluated through self-assessment, and review.

Whilst attending a programme women often make decisions to seek legal and housing advice, start one-to-one counselling or look at support services for their children as a

⁷ Centre for Justice, December 2015

result of their increased awareness and confidence.

The aim is that women who have completed the My Life programme will be recognise and identify their experiences of abuse

- recognise how domestic abuse impacts on children and parenting
- identify support systems and feel less isolated
- develop their confidence in making safe choices and decisions about their future
- demonstrate their knowledge of their rights to access other support and information
- recognise and indicate their feelings
- “put light back in their lives”, and “find me again” (quotes from women who completed the programme)

During 2015, six programmes were delivered, two of which were held in other areas of the County.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

MARACs are multi-agency meetings where statutory and voluntary agency representatives share information about high risk victims of domestic abuse in order to produce a co-ordinated action plan to increase victim safety. Nearly 1,400 cases of domestic abuse were heard by MARACs in Hertfordshire in 2015/16 (with over 300 repeat cases).

We began putting measures in place in 2015 to make several improvements to our MARAC arrangements. We;

- appointed a senior lead from Hertfordshire Constabulary to chair the MARAC steering group and ensure that it remains a priority amongst partnership agencies

- identified common improvement areas via independent MARAC observations
- reviewed the steering group terms of reference and action plan, and implemented quality assurance arrangements for MARACs
- started to review the MARAC operating and information sharing protocols in order to agree a clearer framework for operating MARACs in Hertfordshire
- established the strategic lead, and core/deputy core group members for agencies and ran training sessions

We recognise that further work is required to ensure that these changes are followed through and the required improvements are achieved.

Key priorities

We will

- ensure roles are clear for MARAC core group members and their deputies, and that effective induction arrangements are in place
- ensure that all public sector agencies give the necessary priority to participating at senior level in MARACs
- ensure that participation of the voluntary sector at MARACs is welcomed and valued
- continue to review sample police incidents and the use of the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool, and audit MARAC cases to identify risks
- continue to undertake focussed self-assessments in line with local MARAC principles
- ensure that the important role of Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords is reflected in MARAC arrangements
- develop web-based information systems to be used across MARAC

agencies

- encourage all agencies to use the SafeLives Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) tool to ensure consistency in risk assessment, and quality assure the process
- further review MARAC co-ordination capacity levels to ensure robust administration arrangements

Hertfordshire Constabulary's Domestic Abuse Investigation & Safeguarding Unit (DAISU)

The new Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit (DAISU) opened its doors on the 11 January 2016. Based at Hatfield Police Station, DAISU is a county-wide team which deals with intimate relationship domestic abuse across all risk levels, so-called honour based abuse and forced marriage. DAISU operates from 7am to 11pm seven days a week.

The implementation of DAISU follows a review of domestic abuse services in Hertfordshire, and a similar structure has been implemented in a number of forces across the country. This more streamlined, end to end service will enable the Constabulary to tackle domestic abuse and its aftermath for those most at risk of serious harm, with the objectives of improving service to victims, reducing repeat victimisation, and increasing our expertise in dealing with domestic abuse.

Perpetrators and Specialist Domestic Violence Court Effective Practice

In 2015 we established a Perpetrator and Specialist Domestic Violence Court working group in order to develop an evidence led, multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse perpetrators including prevention, provision of services, management and assessment.

In order to design and deliver services, we need to;

- understand perpetrator behaviour
- identify risk factors likely to be criminogenic
- target risk factors and multiple needs
- use responsive behavioural techniques at the appropriate intensity
- ensure that therapy is sensitive and constructive

So far we have;

- Developed a set of approval criteria which will be used to approve domestic abuse programmes
- Expanded the perpetrator pilot programme in Stevenage to become a countywide service operating out of three bases in areas of highest risk
- Introduced a female perpetrator pilot scheme using the expertise, experience and established infrastructure of the Watford Women's centre and Herts Women's Centre in Stevenage to develop a unique female focused programme that will tackle the underlying causes of female instigated abuse
- Worked with the Stefanou Foundation as a host authority for their new whole family programme that integrates perpetrator support, victim support and parenting support for both parents

We will

- produce multi-agency quality standards for domestic violence courts to include services to the victim and a pre-court programme
- drive improvements in line with the detailed Perpetrator/Specialist DA Court implementation plan
- develop a consistent approach for the

management and assessment of domestic abuse perpetrators and promote the safety of victims contribute to the development of effective prevention strategies to ensure that potential domestic abuse perpetrators are identified early and offered opportunities to change

- support the effective sharing of information to ensure effective multi-agency risk management
- develop an evidence led approach to the commissioning and provision of services for domestic abuse perpetrators
- advise on how front line workers can be appropriately trained to identify, engage and manage perpetrators of domestic abuse and work with key agencies to contribute to protecting victims and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Case study: Operation Acorn

Operation Acorn is the Stevenage community safety partnership's response to domestic abuse which aims to break the cycle of persistent offending by providing appropriate support and alternative measures. The programme also aims to provide enhanced protection and respite for vulnerable victims of domestic abuse. The initiative targets offenders by using the successful processes of Integrated Offender Management, partnership working and legislation, to reduce repeat offending and subsequently keep victims safe.

High risk domestic abuse offenders are asked if they wanted to change their behaviour. If they agree, offenders are tagged with a GPS "Buddi" monitoring system. During the initial pilot, twenty offenders worked with police and partner

agencies and several were accepted on to a perpetrator programme as well as receiving support for drugs rehabilitation where required. The project is also working closely with housing providers to support appropriate moves where required. This is a new approach to tackling domestic abuse by addressing the issues that have led to the abusive behaviour and trying to prevent further offending.

Potential subjects are identified through a risk matrix and are deemed to be high risk to a vulnerable victim. Each subject is then assessed for suitability for either:

- Engage - support through Offender Management Programmes, drug rehabilitation, alcohol groups, Hertfordshire Change programme, Buddi Tag programme, housing and probation, or
- Catch and Convict - if targets are unwilling to engage, they are treated as Prolific and Priority Offenders. Their full criminality is reviewed and opportunities are taken to catch, convict and remand/suitable conditions, to ensure the safety of victims.

During recent months, there has been one repeat offence out of 31 offenders that have been reviewed within the project. This is a significant decrease for Stevenage, having constantly appeared with several offenders in the top ten for Hertfordshire police for repeat offenders and victims.

Case study: Herts Change – Perpetrator programme

The pilot Herts Change Project works with perpetrators of domestic abuse in a group work setting, and offers an integrated support service for their victims.

Clients undergo an initial assessment of suitability for the programme, which is determined by the client's motivation to change, accountability for their actions and awareness of the harm caused.

Consideration is also given to the client's mental health, substance misuse and risk posed. For clients lacking motivation to address their abusive behaviour, assessors offer further assessment sessions and adopt a motivational interviewing approach to encourage and motivate clients into considering change. Whilst on programme, monthly case management meetings are held to review risk levels and create action plans to ensure the safety of the victim and children is maintained. Additional reviews are held within 24 hours of risk alerts being received by the Service Manager.

The pilot programme has been very successful so far with the majority of victims reporting that they feel safer and have not experienced physical violence since their partner completed the programme. Before the programme 54% of women reported that their children were frightened of the perpetrator, this reduced to 34% on completion of the programme. Following the programme qualitative interviews highlighted most women reported more freedom, less anxiety and less fear.

Making the change

When parents A and B were referred to the service, the family had 'broken down', they were living separately and struggled to communicate. The children were subject to Child in Need plans due to the emotional impact of witnessing domestic violence between their parents. Dad completed the full programme and Mum engaged with the support service. Since completion the family are now reunited, the children are no longer open to Children's Social Care and there have been no further reports of domestic violence. The social worker said "the Change project has had a huge impact on this family, it has

enabled Dad to identify his behaviour and to make the changes to reintegrate into the family home, he has been able to rebuild his relationship with his children and his partner".

Domestic Homicide Reviews

Domestic Homicide Reviews are one way to improve responses to domestic abuse and aim to prevent what happened to the victim happening to others. They try to ensure that public bodies like social services, councils, police and other community based organisations understand what happened that led to the death and identify where responses to the situation could be improved. From this, the public bodies hope to learn all the right lessons including those which impact how they work together.

Domestic Homicide Reviews are part of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and became law from 13 April 2011. They do not replace but are in addition to the inquest or any other form of inquiry. Reviews are undertaken by District Community Safety Partnerships.

Hertfordshire has had eight locally based and lead DHRs - whereby the permanent or most frequented address of a victim prior to their death was within one of the 10 local Community Safety Partnership areas since the implementation of related legislation in 2011⁸ all involving female victims. In addition to the eight Hertfordshire-based DHRs, there are a further five DHRs in other parts of the country whereby the scope of these has identified a history within Hertfordshire, and past involvement with Hertfordshire agencies.

In 2015 we established a Domestic Homicide Review sub-group to oversee, monitor and scrutinise countywide arrangements for DHRs. We have;

⁸ Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), Section 9: effective 13th April 2011

- agreed consistent pathways for DHR operational arrangements across Hertfordshire with Community Safety Partnerships
- identified a number of common themes arising from DHRs and agreed a series of actions
- started to implement a process for collating lessons learned

We will

- improve mechanisms for sharing the learning from DHRs, including how the learning is embedded into practice
- implement operational DHR pathways across agencies
- develop, agree and implement a protocol and process for Quality Assurance
- identify central coordination of DHRs and establish robust systems to track the outcomes

Support for victims

We want victims to be safer, and better resourced to remain safe. We want to improve the experience of victims using the courts system so that they feel confident to testify, and empowered to make decisions about their future.

During 2015 the Police and Crime Commissioner created the Beacon Victim Care centre in order to provide all victims of crime with a single point of access where the right information and advice is available and at a time suitable for them. In order to meet with the requirements of the EU directive and 2015 Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, the Beacon Victim Care Centre is:

- free of charge
- confidential
- non-discriminatory (including being available to all regardless of residence status, nationality or citizenship)
- available whether or not a crime has been reported to the police
- available before, during and for an appropriate time after any investigation or criminal proceedings



Case study: Beacon

Responding to the PCC Victims' Voice consultation, a number of victims of domestic abuse provided invaluable insight into their experiences while awaiting justice.

Many victims expressed satisfaction with a service empowering victims and helping individuals regain their confidence and self-esteem. However, for some, the criminal justice system seemed daunting and where receiving timely and accurate information problematic. In extreme cases, some victims had been left chasing agencies for information and on occasion, victims felt they were the only person who knew what other partner agencies were doing. Poor coordination of services can not only lead to additional anxiety and stress at an already difficult time but disengagement from the criminal justice system altogether.

The Beacon Victim Care centre has been created to provide all victims of crime with a single point of access where the right information and advice is available and at a time suitable for them. This includes victims of domestic abuse and where Beacon has a role in coordinating support with more specialist agencies, as well as providing emotional and practical services for victims,

including access to the Hertfordshire Home Security Service. A key partner is Victim Support who provide trained specialist Domestic Abuse volunteers to support those victims designated as 'standard' risk.

All of the Domestic Abuse Volunteers have received SafeLives approved domestic abuse training, which enables them to support victims who are regarded as being both standard and high risk. The training is comprehensive and equips the volunteers with the skills and knowledge needed to provide effective support to victims of domestic abuse, including how to complete the SafeLives risk assessment questionnaire and undertake safety planning, all of which are reviewed periodically by a trained manager.

An important role for Beacon is to ensure that victims of crime have access to support services irrespective whether they have reported the crime to police (or other competent authority). This is a requirement of the European Parliament (2012) Directive 2012/29/EU on the Minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. Therefore victims can contact Beacon direct confident in the knowledge that their needs will be addressed and where direct links with other statutory partners and VCSE sector have been developed to ensure effective support packages are available.

Beacon Victim Care Centre is your gateway to victim services available in Hertfordshire.

*If you have been unfortunate enough to have been a victim of crime, you can speak with a member of our victim service team on **03000 11 55 55**.*

*You can also speak directly to Victim Support on **08 08 16 89 111**. All calls are treated in the strictest of confidence.*

AIM 3 – PROVIDE

Work in partnership to provide appropriate levels of support where abuse occurs

Outcomes we want to achieve

- Victims receive responsive services and risks of further abuse are mitigated
- All identified victims are offered an equally accessible service which meets their needs
- Victims report improved health, wellbeing and resilience
- Demonstrable changes to perpetrators' behaviour and wellbeing

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone at any point of their life irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation or background. It often has a serious and long lasting effect on families, with victims of domestic abuse often becoming repeat victims or sometimes perpetrators themselves. It is therefore essential that Hertfordshire offers a wide range of services that can cater for individual needs at the same time as delivering good value for money.

We want to break the cycle of domestic abuse. This requires us to ensure that there is the right balance of investment between prevention, protection and provision, and also understand what it takes to break the cycle through our earlier and later interventions.

Commissioning services

The design and supply, or commissioning, of domestic abuse services is the largest area of our strategy. We know from the SafeLives review that Hertfordshire was below the national average in terms of spend on specialist services and we have

now started to put a three year funding and commissioning timetable in place. During 2015 we;

- established a domestic abuse commissioning partnership sub-group with representation from key agencies, and appointed a senior Domestic Abuse Commissioning Manager
- conducted a mapping exercise of local domestic abuse services
- identified current secure funding and confirmed this via a Memorandum of Agreement with the Executive Board
- agreed commissioning priorities and a short, medium and longer term commissioning timetable for service redesign
- developed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment so that we can make better informed decisions about the types of services we need
- started a process of engagement with current service providers to identify opportunities to 'add value' to the current offer prior to formal procurement processes being undertaken
- agreed additional funding requirements for the high risk IDVA service, and developed a procurement timetable
- held a number of workshops with refuge providers to enhance partnership working and service options for victims which has led to an agreement to open service access at the evenings and weekends subject to voids
- secured funding to ensure that the *Herts Change* pilot perpetrator programme is expanded and continues to operate whilst work takes place on how we identify effective practice and treatment for perpetrators in the future
- grant funded a female perpetrator pilot programme

We will

- conduct a full options appraisal of service provision and gaps and engage with the voluntary sector to do this
- develop an Integrated Commissioning Plan, leading to a clear framework for a Hertfordshire core 'offer'
- research and consider the use of a data-monitoring tool for overseeing service delivery against the outcomes we expect to see including through commissioned arrangements
- design and commission the new service model contract for the IDVA Service (high risk victims service)
- agree IDVA Service phase two funding and service modelling in order to commission an enhanced IDVA service (medium risk victims service)
- design and agree a model for accommodation based services including timelines and funding
- commission new service arrangements for perpetrator services
- pathways for support - review current 'offer for Hertfordshire', and agree future service delivery model/funding
- children's support - review current arrangements to support children including community based interventions, the identification of opportunities and gaps, and clarify future needs and actions
- evaluate current community services to support victims in the home and commission appropriate future services
- community support services – identify gaps and opportunities, and implement actions to strengthen service responsiveness across care, support and community services
- develop clear approaches for ensuring the service user voice influences service design plans

Partnership approach

There are an enormous number of dedicated stakeholders and professional front line staff working to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place, and providing support when it does. The Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership seeks to bring together representatives from statutory agencies, housing and the voluntary and community sector to improve partnership working, communication and decision making. We want to work with as many organisations as possible to ensure that people living and working in Hertfordshire understand what domestic abuse is and how to respond. We will only achieve our intended outcomes by working together, particularly with the universal services residents use on a daily basis such as schools, hospitals and GPs.

This strategy recognises the importance of working in partnership across agencies to facilitate joint commissioning arrangements and deliver preventative, effective and co-ordinated domestic abuse services.

Partners are committed to;

- *Ensuring the Hertfordshire Joint Commissioning Strategy is underpinned by the development of personalised and needs led services*
- *Two-way dialogue between the public and voluntary sectors to support a root and branch review of the most effective ways to handle each phase of the commissioning cycle, from the initial scoping of requirements to the mechanisms for contract management and review*
- *Implementing a risk management approach to target resources effectively to those most in need*
- *Developing effective partnerships between statutory services and voluntary and community networks to maximise service solutions*

- *Effective and consistent monitoring and data analysis to identify and respond to trends*
- *Best practice and lessons learnt from domestic homicide reviews influencing the direction of travel.*

Case study: Family Safeguarding Teams

The County Council was awarded the highest grant to local authorities in the UK from the government's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme (£4.86 million) to revolutionise children's social care in Hertfordshire. The money funds a ground-breaking change in the way we approach child protection and improve the lives of vulnerable families. It is a completely new way of working for social workers, cutting down on red tape and freeing them up to spend more time with families. The funding has enabled us to press ahead with plans to improve the health, education and wellbeing of more than 1,000 of our highest risk children and families, and we hope it will become a model for other areas.

We have extended the work of our safeguarding teams across the county to include substance misuse workers, community psychiatric nurses, and domestic abuse specialists all trained in new ways of supporting families. The safeguarding teams work alongside schools, children's centres, health visitors, police officers and the voluntary sector.

Multi-disciplinary teams are trained to use the same evidence and practice approach and engage families far more in analysing their own issues and designing their own work plan. Service user feedback has been extremely positive to date and some examples of the work we have done are;

Case 1 - A mother and child, who was on a Child Protection Plan, had moved out of the

family home following a violent incident. The victim was determined that she would 'not let him get away with it' this time and reported the incident to the police. Through dedicated case work, she was able to identify negative areas of her relationship, and desirable and healthy areas of relationships that were missing in her own.

She admitted that during her relationship she had experienced mostly negative emotions and felt guilty. We worked with her to help her put strategies into place that would raise her mood, think of positive actions to protect herself and reduce her feelings of isolation. In her last session she demonstrated a clear understanding of domestic violence and its impact. She shared knowledge gained from sessions with her family and felt confident in using the information given to her to make informed choices regarding future relationships and the impact on her child.

Case 2 - A mum of two children, one of which was on a Child Protection Plan, was initially reluctant to recognise that her relationship had been abusive. She felt that the abuser was a good Dad and that other women experienced 'real abuse'. She felt guilty for breaking up the family and the possible impact on the abuser. Over time she recognised a number of areas where she had experienced abuse, and admitted that she felt powerless to prevent actions which caused her stress in relation to her abuser. Following a violent incident in the family home she contacted the Police to make a statement and gained a non-molestation order against the abuser.

With this order in place, she became more confident. She spoke of needing time for herself and to socialise, and discussed the necessity in future to make safe choices with partners. She became more organised and spoke about her future in a positive way without her former partner. She was able to

demonstrate change as she considered her future and her ability to focus on the needs of her children and protect them from witnessing confrontations between her and her ex-partner.

Adults with complex needs

The Adults with Complex Needs project was established in 2014 and seeks to explore the following theory:

If agencies in Hertfordshire pool resources and work more closely together to identify and deliver services to adults with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles, they will be able to achieve a more cost effective service and deliver interventions, solutions or improvements which are more customer focussed and effective.

Adults with complex needs experience multiple issues, such as mental health needs, drug and alcohol dependency or a lack of stable housing, and are frequent users of high costs services. Research identified that 20 of the most frequent users of services cost in excess of £1.4million over two years to the public sector. Anecdotally, many of these individuals were victims of domestic abuse and almost all had had multiple, negative interactions with the police.

The project is supported by a partnership of key service providers, including health, police, districts and boroughs and community organisations. Following in depth research, partners have committed over £350,000 per year to deliver two pilots in Hertsmer and Three Rivers to test the theory above.

The pilot service offers personalised support, working towards individuals goals which lead individuals to stronger relationships, appropriate accommodation and meaningful occupation. Through the

pilot it is anticipated that partners will be able to share learning with other practitioners and that, in the longer term, evaluation will influence strategic commissioning.

Our aim is to demonstrate that by working more intensively and preventatively with individuals, we will not only generate sustainable outcomes, but reduce the cost of service use. To do so, we offer support built on personal goals, community based recovery plans and dedicated key worker support.

Refuge

Refuges provide a safe sanctuary for victims in immediate danger while they make supported decisions about their future. Hertfordshire has maintained Refuge provision levels over the last decade, and agencies and providers are working closely together to consider opportunities for enhancing existing services, and designing future accommodation models.

Opportunities for short and medium term

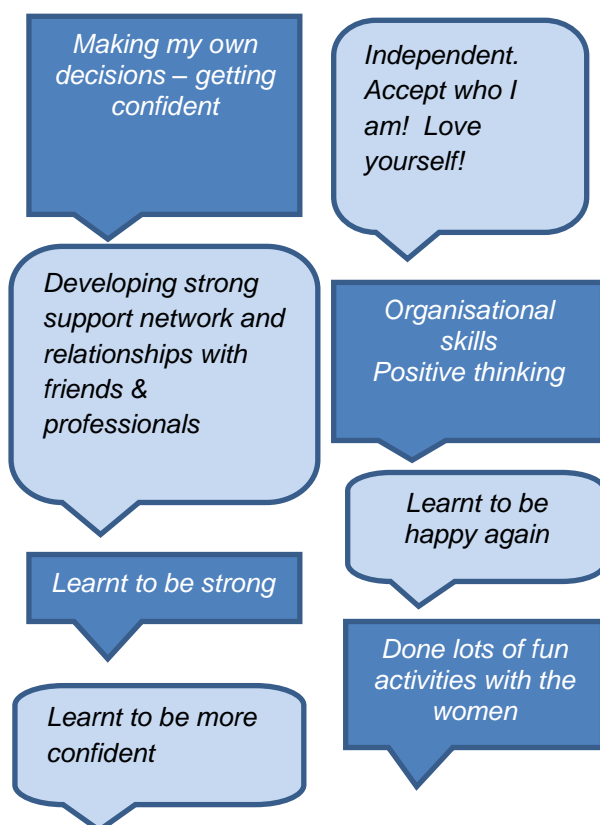
- Case studies showcasing 'social value' to highlight the wider benefits and contribution to society
- Service provision for male victims via floating support services
- Service access to be provided out of hours and weekends (a refreshed protocol to be developed between refuges and the constabulary)
- Refuge involvement in workforce learning and development to raise awareness of the service offering

Refuge Service Opportunities for the future accommodation model

- Provision of a 'crash pad' facility – a service for 1 - 7 days only
- Outreach provision across all districts

- Service provision for male victims and young people of transition age
- Exploration of reciprocal service access arrangements with border local authorities

Women's voices on what they had gained from being in St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge



Hearing and responding to service users' voice

Consultation with service users in developing our plans and services is critical to ensuring that we design responsive services that meet the needs of the whole community. Responses to the recent victims' voice survey and the SafeLives review victims consultation have been used to shape this strategy and our commissioning plans. We want to improve existing arrangements and will consider the use of service user panels in our

commissioning plans, and work with the voluntary and community sector in particular to ensure that both victims and perpetrators continue to have their say.

The complexity of domestic abuse makes it particularly important to hear the voices of service users about their risks and needs and the kinds of choices that they would want to have available. The insights of service users in the County, combined with broader evidence, can help us see how services need to transform and develop.

Stronger dialogue between services and sectors will be key to creating the conditions for Hertfordshire to respond to the voices of service users and put in place provision that meet their risk, needs and choices.

This dialogue between services and sectors needs to include:

- Clarifying the understanding of the roles of specialist domestic abuse services (e.g. IDVAs, refuge), related services (e.g. generic family support or housing provision) or new hybrid services and programmes for adults, children or families to overcome domestic abuse
- A deeper shared understanding of the nature of risk within domestic abuse, for example the distinction between static and dynamic risks and how to assess and manage these
- Building more creative pathways between services, for example, highly specialist and universal services, between different disciplines such as mental health and criminal justice for perpetrator support or domestic abuse and substance misuse for young people

- Consultation with the voluntary and community sector to inform understanding of the different service users, given the diversity of need and risk between and within different communities and the particular requirement to remove obstacles for those who may find it harder to access services, including male victims, female perpetrators, older people, those with disabilities or sensory loss, the LGBT*Q community and particular groups such as Traveller communities
- Careful work to create a safe environment in which commissioners and providers can consider together how to respond to the voices of service users for fundamentally different options to become available, e.g. the desire of many victims to stay in their homes and communities

Service user feedback 2014/15

People just point the finger and assume the man is the protagonist and offender.

I was continuously made to feel like I was the offender

There needs to be better support for victims of drink and drugs, and better understanding of domestic violence.

Everything was done to protect the offender's rights

You should have more places for victims and their children

If I'm not privy to this vital information how am I able to keep myself and my daughter safe?

They always focussed on me but I wasn't the problem.

The police were really helpful. They explained MARAC to me and kept me updated.

I am a jealous person; I wanted my girlfriend with me all the time. Now I have lost her because of my behaviour. The (Herts Change) programme helped me to understand how that affected her, maybe if I had done this course sooner we would still be together.

I didn't call the police because in the country I grew up in they wouldn't help, and I didn't know what to expect.

When things are bad you don't know what to do. You need someone calling you, being understanding and giving you options.

Champion's network

We are in the process of establishing a 'champion's network'. Only by ensuring professionals have a sound and common understanding of domestic abuse – its dynamics and impact – and the ability and capacity to work more effectively, can we begin to ensure the safety of victims. A champions' network, with public and voluntary sector representatives, enables this by coordinating the dissemination of improved understanding that ensures consistent, quality and timely information.

'Champions' are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support internal and external structures and inter- and intra-agency partnerships by providing advice and guidance where domestic abuse is a concern, and assisting colleagues to navigate access to appropriate services.

They would also have enhanced knowledge of how other services can assist in cases and help signpost others to the right agency or service. By involving public and voluntary sector representatives, part of the remit for the Champions' Network could be as a conduit to open the eyes of the public sector to what is available in the community.

Network membership is likely to include representatives from:

- Nursing / Health visiting
- Domestic abuse outreach services
- Community Safety Officers
- Substance Misuse Workers
- Social Workers
- Police Officers/PCSOs
- Relationship Therapists
- Family Support Workers
- Sexual Health Workers

The Champions' network could be supported by a 'closed' / members only

web-based forum and a programme of cyclical and regular training, network meetings and events, and bulletins.

Honour Based Abuse including Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

The National Police Chief's Council definition of Honour Based Abuse is;

"A crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community".

It is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'. Relatives and acquaintances that do not abide by the 'rules' set for them are then punished for bringing shame on the family or community. Common triggers for honour based abuse can include having a boyfriend or girlfriend, rejecting a forced marriage, pregnancy outside of marriage, interfaith relationships, seeking divorce, and inappropriate dress or make-up.

The Government will continue to challenge the cultural attitudes that may underpin practices of FGM and forced marriage and ensure professionals have the confidence to confront these issues.

We know that our front line professional staff may have limited opportunities to speak to potential victims of honour based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation which means that *all* professionals need to be aware the issues, how to identify when it might be happening and what to do. If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support being offered, that one opportunity might be lost.

Forced marriage is a criminal offence and statutory agencies and institutions where victims may be accessible need to work together to increase awareness and support

for these victims. We know that despite the recorded numbers, forced marriage still remains a hidden practice, as many more cases remain unreported.

There are multi-agency services available but work needs to be done to align this with the statutory requirements on dealing with forced marriage and honour based abuse.

Partnership agencies need to work together to;

- Develop and embed clear care pathways
- Focus on raising awareness within health agencies and schools to recognise, prevent and refer
- Work with communities to increase an awareness of support that is available for victims and an individual's right to choose

we will;

- use the results of our local multi-agency self-assessment against the HM Government: FM/HBV Guidance to determine service priorities for the partnership and commissioning arrangements
- raise awareness among the public and professionals/agencies focusing on health agencies and children's services including schools to recognize, provide information and give a route to seek help
- provide training for the agencies' staff to recognize, report and refer
- develop and agree clear care pathway from initial identification shared by all agencies
- access to appropriate services for support and actions - reducing or protecting from risk of/harm

we will;

- work with faith leaders to raise awareness within vulnerable communities and develop positive relationships.
- work with the charity Barnado's to ensure that we are doing all we can to help eradicate the illegal practice of female genital mutilation

The Government VAWG Strategy

It is the Governments' intention to publish a National Statement of Expectations (NSE) to make clear to local partnerships what good commissioning and service provision looks like. This will provide a blueprint for all local areas to follow, setting out core expectations, but giving them the freedom to respond to meet local needs.

To help deliver on these expectations, local partnerships will have access to new targeted, expert support from a network of local and national practitioners. The Government will make sure that all partnerships have access to the best examples of local practice, along with the data, tools and information they need to improve local commissioning. The Government will provide local areas with the resources they need support transformation by aligning increased central Government funding to promote effective local leadership, joined up commissioning and the evaluation of emerging models which support earlier intervention and coherent pathways of victim support.

The Government recognises that some sectors of society can experience multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage or additional barriers to accessing support. These include women and girls from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(LGB&T) women, older women and disabled women, adults who seek help for childhood sexual abuse, and the needs of female offenders who have also been victims of violence and abuse. The Government support to promote effective local commissioning will focus on ensuring the needs of all victims are met.

To help meet this challenge, the Government will provide £80 million of dedicated funding over this spending review period. This funding will provide core support for refuges and other accommodation-based services, helping local areas ensure that no woman is turned away from the support she needs. It will include specific provision for women from BME backgrounds, and innovative services for the most vulnerable with complex needs. The funding will also support a network of rape support centres, and a network of national helplines. Critically, from 2017, this increased funding will also support the launch of a VAWG Service Transformation Fund to support, promote and embed the best local practice.

Local commissioning priorities

Based on local information reviewed in the JSNA and findings from the SafeLives review, a range of key issues have been identified and used to inform the commissioning strategy and timetable for future activity. These include the following:

1. *There is evidence that domestic abuse victims require services to be developed through integrated pathways and approaches.*
2. *In meeting the needs of the whole community, there is inconsistent and minimal intelligence in relation to the needs of and impacts for people with specific and multiple equality characteristics (as outlined in the Equality Act 2010).*
3. *Due to limited monitoring and fragmented approaches to commissioning existing services, there is the need to implement an integrated outcomes focused framework for measuring progress against future strategic delivery.*
4. *Professionals working in services across statutory services and within community settings need to better understand how to recognise and report domestic abuse.*
5. *Targeted awareness raising and effective communications outlining both the victim and professional pathways are needed to support early intervention and / or ensure victims receive timely access to appropriate information, guidance and specialist support.*
6. *The experiences and involvement of victims including children, as well as perpetrators needs to directly influence service design and delivery. This is not routinely currently evidenced.*
7. *Risk management is key – services offered to victims must consider not only how to meet the current presenting need but also how to prevent that risk from escalating and recurring*
8. *There is the need for a clear 'pathway' for victims that triages support*
9. *IDVA services need to be sustainable and have a presence in a wider range of community settings to maximise reach*
10. *Service interventions need to incorporate 'minimum standards' in line with best practice*
11. *Secure funding is needed to sustain service viability and responsiveness*
12. *More support is needed to respond to peaks in demand i.e. weekends and evenings*

Commissioning Principles

The following four thematic areas underpin future commissioning principles;

1. Early intervention and prevention

- Victims receive clear and co-ordinated, accessible information, advice and signposting
- Victims and perpetrators are encouraged to seek help earlier in the trajectory of abuse
- Children receive educational support to develop healthy relationships
- Priority is given to getting children back into education if moving into refuge or short term accommodation
- Service provision manages risk while supporting change and recovery to prevent domestic abuse and its impact from continuing, recurring or escalating

2. Services are responsive

- Professionals from partner agencies recognise signs of abuse
- Agencies provide a safe environment for disclosures to be made
- Identification of abuse and disclosures result in timely and appropriate referrals through integrated pathways
- Victims are listened to and services are needs-led for men, women and children
- Best practice interventions are identified and utilised with perpetrators
- Appropriate types of support are available out of hours and at weekends

3. Services meet the needs of the whole community

- Service developments are underpinned by robust equality impact assessments
- There is ongoing and targeted engagement with communities at a local level to build trust and develop future services
- A 'no wrong door' is developed across agencies
- Services have a 'whole family' approach
- Services aim to break cycles and patterns of domestic abuse and overcome the impact it has on individual and family wellbeing and relationships

4. Effective governance and partnership arrangements underpin commissioning

- Services are underpinned by national accreditation ensuring minimum quality standards are met
- Needs analysis for commissioning options is based on a risk management approach
- An outcomes focussed performance framework will be used to measure progress against delivery of the strategy
- Commissioned services receive routine contract monitoring, seeking evidence of social value, value for money and positive outcomes for victims and people affected
- Service solutions will focus on developing sustainable partnerships, including between commissioned, non-commissioned services, local and national agencies

Risk factors

Risk factors that might prevent the commissioning strategy from being realised include;

- A lack of engagement and timely 'buy in' from key service providers including education links
- Insufficient and insecure funding arrangements
- Commissioning decisions being made outside of a joint commissioning and multi-agency approach
- Inconsistent application of contract management and quality assurance oversight of services
- Unclear pathways across partner agencies
- A lack of understanding of domestic abuse in communities and with practitioners

We will mitigate these risks by;

- Consulting with key agencies to inform decision making – and sharing a timetable of core commissioning activity
- Developing robust business cases outlining projected needs and cost implications
- Underpinning the commissioning strategy with a commitment to multi-agency working
- Developing proportionate approaches for contract monitoring and quality assurance – and developing overarching KPI's
- Developing and communicating practitioner and victim referral pathways for support
- Developing and implementing a communications strategy to assist with victims and perpetrators recognising the signs of abuse, referral routes to services and what support is available to meet their needs.
- Ensuring that practitioners have appropriate workforce development interventions

Legislative framework

Significant new legislation is now in place including specific offences of stalking, forced marriage, failure to protect from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and revenge pornography, as well as the new domestic abuse offence to capture coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship. In shaping this strategy, we have taken into account a number of sector specific legislation and publications including:

On the 25th of November 2010, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Coalition government launched a paper outlining their ambition and guiding principles to tackle violence against women and girls.	In November 2013, the government announced their intention to roll out nationally both domestic violence protection orders and the domestic violence disclosure scheme across England and Wales from March 2014.
In 2011, Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011. Locally, the District Community Safety Partnership is responsible for determining whether such a review should take place in the event of a death, establishing a review and overseeing subsequent reports and actions.	In March 2013, the coalition government introduced a change in the definition of domestic violence and abuse. It was widened to include young people aged 16 to 17 and coercive control – a pattern of controlling behaviour. The decision followed a consultation that saw respondents call overwhelmingly for this change
In November 2012 the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was updated by provisions made in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, creating 2 new offences for stalking. The new offences were made under sections 2A and 4A of the 1997 Act and cover: stalking, stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm and distress. The amendments also set out new police powers to enter and search premises (on provision of a warrant – section 2B) in relation to these offences.	Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) were introduced by the Crime and Security Act 2010, and enable the police to put in place protection for the victim in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident. Under DVPOs, the perpetrator can be prevented from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim a level of breathing space to consider their options, with the help of a support agency. If appropriate, the process can be run in tandem with criminal proceedings
The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) introduces a framework with recognised and consistent processes to enable the police to disclose to the public information about previous violent offending by a new or existing partner where this may help protect them from further violent offending. The DVDS introduces two types of process for disclosing this information. The first is triggered by a request by a member of the public (‘right to ask’). The second is triggered by the police where they make a proactive decision to disclose the information in order to protect a potential victim (‘right to know’). Both processes can be implemented within existing legal powers.	FGM has been a specific criminal offence in the UK since 1985 when the (UK-wide) Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act (“the 1985 Act”) was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (“the 2003 Act”) replaced the 1985 Act in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ¹ . It modernised the offence of FGM and the offence of assisting a girl to carry out FGM on herself while also creating extra-territorial offences to deter people from taking girls abroad for mutilation. To reflect the serious harm caused, the 2003 Act increased the maximum penalty for any of the FGM offences from five to 14 years’ imprisonment.

Appendix 1 – HM Government Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Government's vision is that by 2020:

- There is a significant reduction in the number of VAWG victims, achieved by challenging the deep-rooted social norms, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against and limit women and girls, and by educating, informing and challenging young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent;
- All services make early intervention and prevention a priority, identifying women and girls in need before a crisis occurs, and intervening to make sure they get the help they need for themselves and for their children;
- Women and girls will be able to access the support they need, when they need it, helped by the information they need to make an informed choice;
- Specialist support, including accommodation-based support, will be available for the most vulnerable victims, and those with complex needs will be able to access the services they need;
- Services in local areas will work across boundaries in strong partnerships to assess and meet local need, and ensure that services can spot the signs of abuse in all family members and intervene early;
- Women will be able to disclose experiences of violence and abuse across all public services, including the NHS. Trained staff in these safe spaces will help people access specialist support whether as victims or as perpetrators;
- Elected representatives across England and Wales will show the leadership, political will and senior accountability necessary to achieve the necessary change, and will champion efforts to tackle these crimes;
- Everyone in a local area will be able to hold their elected leaders to account through clear data on how local need is being met;
- There will be a lower level of offending through an improved criminal justice response and a greater focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators through a combination of disruption and support; and
- A stronger evidence base of what works, and victim safety, will be embedded into all interventions to protect victims of VAWG.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
DA	Domestic Abuse
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HBA/V	Honour Based Abuse / Violence
HSCB	Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
HSAB	Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Forced Marriage
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LGBT*Q	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court