

# Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-2025

Preventing and eradicating violence and abuse in  
Hillingdon is everybody's business



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

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## Foreword

Domestic abuse and the many forms of violence and abuse which disproportionately affect women and girls are wholly intolerable, are a fundamental abuse of the victims' human rights and represent serious crimes. The Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP), together with its partners, is committed to preventing, tackling and eradicating domestic abuse (DA) and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all its forms. We aim to make our borough a safer place for all; for those who live in, work in or visit the borough, and to ensure that women, children and men are safe in their own homes.

Our vision is for Hillingdon to be an area in which no form of VAWG is tolerated and where victims and their children know how and where to get the help they need. The same is true for the professionals supporting and working for and with them. We want to ensure that the professionals working together have the right capability to provide the right support at the right time for victims and survivors. The implementation of this strategy will be underpinned by a robust delivery and communication plan that will represent a further step change in how the SHP responds to violence and abuse in Hillingdon and leads to real change for our residents and visitors to the borough.

We will continue in this work through this and other supporting strategies and plans.

This strategy sets out our community partnership approach as we enhance our commitment to intervene as early as possible to support victims, survivors, children and their families to seek help and support, report crimes, stay safe and rebuild their lives. We know too, that exposure to violence and abuse early on in life can have long lasting consequences, which is why we are committed to these priorities and to ensuring that the right people are provided with the right support and help at the right time. We will do this through our Stronger Families Hub and in the provision of all our other services.

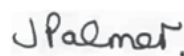
Whilst we have zero tolerance to violence and abuse, we also want perpetrators to recognise their destructive behaviour and to seek help.

We all have a responsibility to help put an end to DA and VAWG, which is why together we must have absolute zero tolerance to it. As a partnership and as a community we can end it and make a very real difference to many, many people's daily lives.

We would like to thank everyone involved in preventing, responding to and tackling domestic abuse and VAWG and safeguarding our residents and supporting those victimised to recover.



**Councillor Eddie Lavery,  
Cabinet Member for Residents' Services,  
Chairman Safer Hillingdon Partnership**



**Councillor Jane Palmer,  
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care,  
Chairman Domestic Abuse Steering Executive**

## Foreword by a survivor

It has been over 20 years since I was the victim of daily domestic violence and abuse – it never goes away, and it never leaves you. To this day, I cannot trust anyone, I am always on the defensive, alert to problems – my mind jumps to the bad days of violence.

I remember this like it was yesterday. Not everyone understands what you are going through – you blame yourself, and think everyone is blaming you too.

It is not just the adults that are affected, it affects the children and others too. To this day my children – now adults themselves – are affected. We all bear the scars, notably the psychological scars of what happened, these are constant reminders. It never goes away.

Professionals, like the police, social workers, housing officers and teachers must understand the signs and indicators of domestic violence and abuse. They can make a real difference to the lives of victims, survivors and their children. What they do and say is vital.

I was placed in a refuge close to where my perpetrator lived. I was placed in many refuges, but he found me every time. The police took my children to school. How can this be? My children should never have seen what they saw. Professionals need to understand victims and their children and the many affects upon them and the consequences too. The professionals need to understand and learn from victims' experiences.

I am hypervigilant to what people say to this day. Some people can't understand why I didn't leave him – they blame me. I think the professionals at the time blamed me too. They all knew what was going on.

It is great to see some of the developments that are taking place in the borough. The professionals must work together, they must share information and work with all the family members, not just one part.

**Sally, a local resident**

# Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our partnership approach in Hillingdon to preventing and ending domestic abuse, whilst improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and families. This strategy seeks to build upon our existing successful partnership work, to further increase public awareness and to build a sustainable coordinated community response with local communities, individuals, family members, friends, employers and co-workers to tackle violence and abuse in all its forms. We will achieve this through projects and initiatives in an agreed programme of work overseen by the Domestic Abuse Steering Executive. The principles informing this programme are set out in this strategy and will be further developed in a supporting delivery plan.

We will continue to promote a zero-tolerance approach to the perpetration of violence and abuse of women and girls who are disproportionately victimised by domestic abuse, sexual violence and exploitation and stalking. We recognise that such offences very rarely happen in isolation and all too often come together in a continuum of offending. So, for example, forced marriage is domestic abuse and will often be associated with sexual offending and in some cases modern slavery too. This strategy is inclusive and recognises that men, boys and older people experience such crimes too. Our coordinated community response approach is intolerable of any violence and abuse against any community member irrespective of their sex, age or other background.

The reality is that inter-personal violence happens in public and private spaces with such a prevalence that it is all around us. We are all affected by it.

We know through our own local experiences, through research and reviews, such as the Home Office's *'Key Findings from Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews'* that domestic abuse is still under-reported and is not consistently identified or recognised by professionals in contact with victims. Given the dire impact on victims and their children, both in the short and longer term, and the significant economic impact resulting from domestic abuse, we recognise that a lot more still needs to be done to empower victims, survivors, witnesses and 'by-standers' including family members, neighbours, friends, employers and co-workers to come forward, report the violence and seek or provide support. Early responses and interventions are vital to reduce the threat and risk of offending and to prevent such abuse deepening. Therefore, we also recognise that early identification and intervention by front line professionals is critical but that a collective, community response will be needed to truly make a difference.

Reported data on domestic abuse shows a national surge in domestic abuse cases during the Coronavirus pandemic, and sadly Hillingdon was not immune from this. Forced isolation; being trapped with an abuser over extended periods of time, restrictions on movement and the wider impact of the lockdowns led to an increase in already abusive relationships and households. The public health restrictions meant that domestic abuse victims had no respite from their abusers and were unable to safely access help and advice from support services or access services in the same way that they had been used to.

It is crucial that we consistently raise awareness of what domestic abuse is, how it presents; what are the signs, indicators and 'red flags' and what to do next, including how to find specialist support services and how to safely access these.

Our approach also aims to break the cycle of repetitive abuse and harmful behaviours and repeat victimisation by holding perpetrators to account. We also want to create an environment whereby perpetrators who want to change can do so; they can come forward and seek the right help to change for the right reasons.

Our joined up approach also ensures that we provide support to families, recognising that some victims may not want to be separated from their abuser, emphasising the importance of a whole family approach.

## The impact of domestic abuse

The human cost and suffering caused to domestic abuse victims is immense, and in some cases it has unimaginable impacts to those who have not experienced it. Victims, survivors and their children suffer long-term negative effects of psychological, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, which present in many different ways.

NICE research documents that the physical impacts of domestic abuse include:

- direct results of physical violence, including bruising, stab wounds, broken bones, burns, traumatic brain injury, back or pelvic pain, headaches, and death.
- long-term physical health conditions caused as a result of the impact of domestic violence and abuse on the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, endocrine, and immune systems through chronic stress or other mechanisms.
- reproductive impacts, including gynaecological disorders, pelvic inflammatory disease and pregnancy complications.
- psychological impacts, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and increased likelihood of misusing drugs, alcohol or prescribed anti-depressants.

With the exception of gender-specific impacts on women (such as gynaecological problems), the impacts for men and women are similar. However, for men, severe physical violence is less likely and severe depression is more likely, especially in older men.

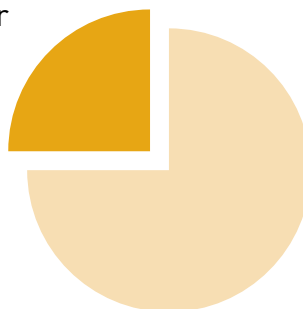
Department of Health research showed that children living in households where there is domestic violence and abuse can be significantly harmed by neglect that may result, in addition to being exposed to, or being involved in, the abuse.<sup>2</sup> Exposure to domestic violence and abuse affects the mental, emotional and psychological health of the child and their social and educational development. It also increases their likelihood of experiencing, or becoming perpetrators of, domestic violence and abuse as adults, and exposes them directly to physical harm.<sup>3,4</sup> In a research study conducted by CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse)<sup>5</sup>:



**62 per cent** of children exposed to domestic violence and abuse were also directly harmed (physically, emotionally or neglected) as well as witnessing the abuse of a parent.

**25 per cent** of both boys and girls exposed to domestic violence and abuse exhibited abusive behaviours themselves, most frequently towards their mother or sibling (and rarely towards the main perpetrator of the domestic violence and abuse).

Children were more likely to show abusive behaviours after exposure to the domestic violence and abuse had ended.



In addition to other impacts,

**52 per cent** of children had behavioural problems,

**39 per cent** had difficulties adjusting at school, and

**60 per cent** felt responsible for negative events.

The levels of injuries caused can leave lasting and in some cases life-long physical and psychological injuries as well as limiting life opportunities. Whatever the circumstances, domestic abuse victims, survivors and their children carry their experiences with them. Their experiences cannot be undone which is why early intervention must remain one of our key priorities.

There are also substantial wider societal costs too associated with responding to domestic abuse on policing, healthcare, social care, the criminal and civil justice system as well as the impact on employers and the wider economic consequences. The 2019 to 2020 Statutory Homelessness Annual Report showed that around one in 11 households in England (8.7 per cent) who were homeless or threatened with homelessness recorded domestic abuse as the main reason. And the charity St Mungo's reported that 35 per cent of women they worked with who had slept rough left home to escape violence.

Government research<sup>6</sup> published in 2019 established that overall, in the year ending 31 March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales. The biggest component of the estimated cost is the physical and emotional harms incurred by victims (£47 billion), particularly the emotional harms (the fear, anxiety and depression experienced by victims as a result of domestic abuse), which account for the overwhelming majority of the overall costs. The cost to the economy is also considerable, with an estimated £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity as a consequence of domestic abuse. Costs to health services were estimated at £2.3 billion and the police at £1.3 billion, whilst housing costs totalled £550 million, which includes temporary housing, homelessness services and repairs and maintenance.

## Children and young people

We recognise that children and young people are victims in their own right in instances where they live in households where violence between parents exists. Children's traumatic experiences can have lasting impacts on their mental health, physical health, confidence and general wellbeing. We have also recognised that there are children and young people who commit violence and abuse against their siblings, parents, guardians or carers. As a result, we prioritise early intervention and support for children and young people at risk of exposure to domestic abuse.

In the financial year 2021/22, in Hillingdon there were 741 children in the high-risk domestic abuse cases heard by the multi-agency risk assessment conferences. Similarly, a significant number of children are represented in the high-risk cases being managed by the Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS). There are year-on-year increases in the referrals to both of these services, which is complemented by the rising number of children affected by the violence and abuse.

Prevention starts with changing attitudes by working with children from a young age to raise their awareness and educate them about equality and respect. There is evidence that educational programmes can help change the attitudes of young people towards domestic abuse and the government's commitment that relationship and sex education will be made mandatory in schools is an important step.

While speaking to victims and survivors, a majority had witnessed domestic abuse as children. A focus on the support for children and young people witnessing abuse is needed to address a cycle of abuse.

<sup>1</sup> [cks.nice.org.uk/topics/domestic-violence-abuse/background-information/consequences/](https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/domestic-violence-abuse/background-information/consequences/)

<sup>2</sup> DH (2017) Responding to domestic abuse: a resource for health professionals. Department of Health.

<sup>3</sup> NICE (2014) Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

<sup>4</sup> RCN (2017) Domestic abuse. Royal College of Nursing.

<sup>5</sup> CAADA (2014) In plain sight: effective help for children exposed to domestic abuse. Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse.

<sup>6</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse)



# Our vision, commitment and priorities

## Our vision

Our vision is for Hillingdon to be an area in which no form of domestic abuse is tolerated and where victims and their children know how and where to get the help they need.

## Our commitment

As a partnership we remain committed to:

Preventing and eradicating all forms of violence and abuse against women, children and men in Hillingdon borough and supporting those so victimised to achieve their full potential in life.

## Our priorities

Our work priorities have been informed by consultation with, and listening to, victims/survivors, statutory partners, charities, voluntary organisations and the domestic abuse commissioned services. They are:

- Priority 1 - Prevention and early intervention
- Priority 2 - Provision of services which provide protection and support
- Priority 3 - Pursuing perpetrators and supporting perpetrators to address their behaviour
- Priority 4 - Partnership working to ensure a coordinated community response.

### Priority 1 – Prevention and early intervention

Together we will work with victims/survivors, communities, civil society organisations, statutory organisations and other partners to make the domestic violence and abuse unacceptable and dishonourable in all of our communities. We will use evidence-based models, a resilient coordinated community response and Think Family approaches.

### Priority 2 – Provision of services – protection and support

We will seek to provide support services which ensure victims are safe and supported to recover and rebuild their lives following domestic abuse. To do this we will seek to develop a clear understanding of victim's needs, and ensure we understand their experiences of our services and those acting on our behalf. We will listen and take action to improve what we do. We will commission services intelligently and secure the right ones to meet local needs in providing high quality coordinated services.

### Priority 3 – Pursuing perpetrators and supporting perpetrators to address their behaviour

Together we will work with partners to strengthen the responses to perpetrators. We will work with partners including non-justice agencies to strengthen their part in assessing, intervening and minimising the risks posed by perpetrators. We will robustly manage repeat offenders and as a priority support perpetrators to change their behaviour.

### Priority 4 – Effective partnership working

Together with the Safer Hillingdon Partnership, we will work collaboratively with a broad coalition of partners as part of a coordinated community response; to create a safer borough for all and a safer, stronger future for victims, survivors and future generations so that they can realise their full potential in life.

## Our values

We have adopted a number of underpinning principles which guide our approach to tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims:

### **- viewing the problem through the lens of gender and taking a gendered approach**

In a gendered approach we take account of the differences in women's and men's lives and how this affects them, for example in health, employment and other opportunities. Seeing domestic abuse in the context of gender helps to make sense of the wider context, nature, scale and consequences of it to understand how we can stop it.

### **- understanding the inter-sectional needs of victims/survivors**

If we are to truly provide the best possible service to victims and survivors we must understand who they are and how this affects their ability to access services.

### **- taking a trauma informed approach**

Professionals seek to understand the victim and their experiences. There is no such thing as a typical victim and each victim will be affected by their experiences in different ways. Accordingly, professionals should not and cannot make subjective assessments about victims and their experiences. We must 'walk in the victim's shoes' if we are to truly understand them, their experience and the impact of the violence and abuse upon them.

Our five guiding principles are: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment.

### **- professionals exercising due diligence supported by 'professional curiosity'**

Professionals doing their job to the best of their ability within their training and being curious, asking questions and not accepting matters at face value.

We also recognise that how we deliver our services is crucial too; with professionalism, care, compassion, sensitivity, understanding and trust being paramount. In the exercise of professional curiosity, our partnership professionals will ask questions at the right time for the right reason.

## What we know about domestic abuse in Hillingdon

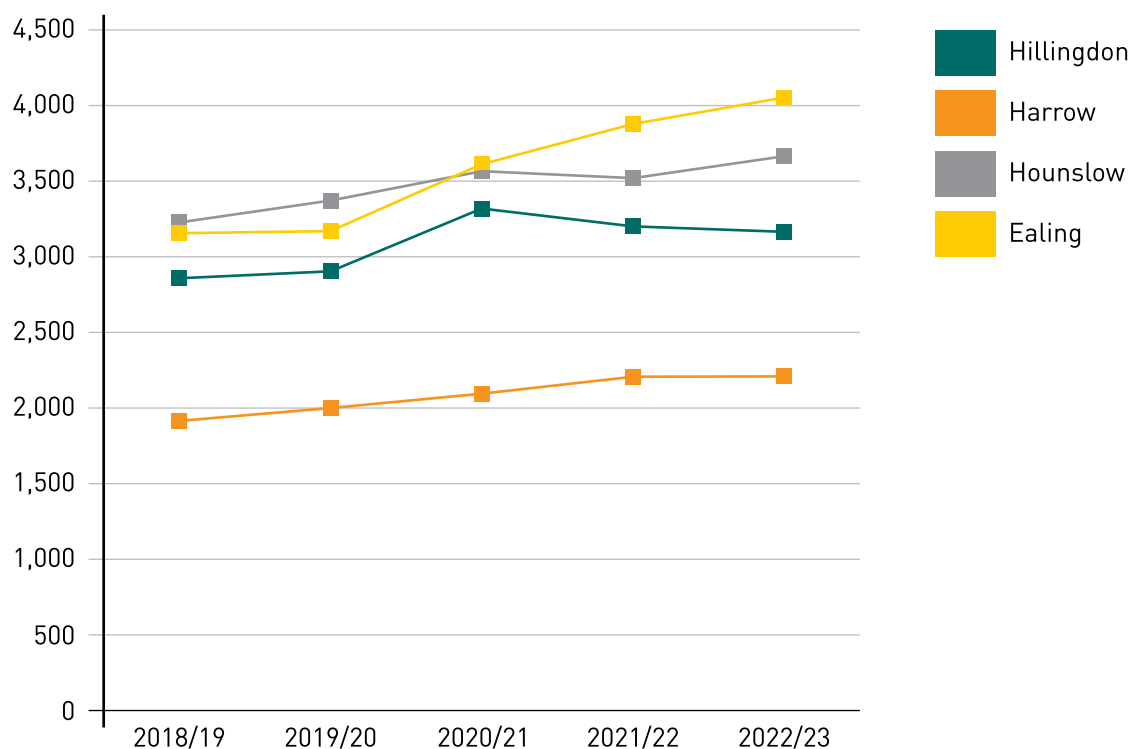
Our understanding of domestic abuse in Hillingdon comes from a number of different sources, including incidents reported to the police, information recorded by services, and context provided by partner organisations.

In relation to crime data, domestic violence is considered to be – “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults.”

Data from the Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime shows that recorded domestic abuse crimes decreased marginally in the period January to December 2022 compared with the same period in 2021 (from 3,193 to 3,165, down 0.9 per cent).

However, since 2018 there has been an increase of 11 per cent (equating to 307 incidents per year) with 2,858 incidents recorded in 2018 and 3,165 incidents in 2022.

The graph below shows the five year trend in incident numbers in comparison to other neighbouring London boroughs.



Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of victims experiencing high-risk levels of domestic abuse being referred to HDAAS and to the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). In the three years to March 2021:

- The Domestic Abuse MARAC managed 1,529 referrals of high-risk cases. This is a 49.8 per cent increase compared with the three-year period from 2015 to 2018.
- The Hillingdon IDVA service supported 2,267 referrals of high-risk cases. This is a 19 per cent increase compared to the three-year period 2015 to 2018.

There are a number of factors which may account for this increase in referrals including the increasing awareness within communities to support the recognition of domestic abuse and also local professionals more readily identifying high-risk cases. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on domestic abuse throughout 2020/21.

As the number of high-risk cases identified is increasing, so too is the disturbing number of children in these violent and abusive households and relationships. This is further highlighted in

the number of cases being referred to and supported by the Hillingdon Stronger Families Hub. The Hillingdon Stronger Families Hub provides a single point of contact for families that may need information, advice or support. In the 12 months to August 2023 the Stronger Families Hub received over 25,000 requests for assistance. Of the total number, just under 4,000 (3,929) of these related to domestic abuse which accounted for 15.51 per cent of all requests received by the Hub. This is the highest reason for Hillingdon's Children's Social Care being contacted and support being requested (excluding 'vulnerability' which is a category of need that applies to a wide range of child welfare matters).

Over 34 per cent of the referrals to the hub were from the police, over 19 per cent from schools, and over 18 per cent from health services. 1,500 of these referrals were sent to the Stronger Families locality team which provides targeted support.

## **London Domestic and Sexual Violence helpline**

In the addition to the above data, between 2018 and 2021, 2,984 Hillingdon residents (women and men) have called the London Domestic and Sexual Violence helpline for advice and assistance. For some, this is the first crucial step in getting help.

## **How we will improve our understanding of domestic abuse in Hillingdon**

There are gaps in our shared understanding of domestic abuse in Hillingdon which we need to address. The Domestic Abuse Steering Executive has agreed that a domestic abuse dashboard should be developed to better support the executive in its understanding of the nature of domestic abuse and how it is changing. This dashboard will need to contain relevant data from a range of partners and will be developed in 2024.

Our understanding of how domestic abuse affects people from different communities and how accessible our support services are to all victims also needs to improve. We need to be clear if domestic abuse affects some communities more than others and whether our support services meet the needs of all communities.

We also need to make sure we regularly hear from survivors of domestic abuse so that we can improve our approach based on the experiences of people who have suffered from this crime.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership Serious Violence Needs Assessment will be prepared in 2023. The purpose of this needs assessment, which is being prepared as part of the work to meet the new statutory duties to prevent and tackle serious violence, is to document the nature of serious violence in Hillingdon, the causes and drivers of that violence and the response to it, to help us form a strategy to reduce serious violence. Serious violence includes domestic abuse and therefore this needs assessment will provide insight into domestic abuse in the borough and help us refine our plans so they are as effective as possible.

# How we are tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims in Hillingdon

The borough has seen its domestic abuse provision evolve and develop over the few last years.

## Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service

In June 2022, the Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS) was introduced which consists of both Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and floating support caseworkers.

HDAAS adopts a one front door approach to the IDVA and Floating Support Service, enabling an easier and more accessible service for referral partners and those wanting to self-refer. The service utilises a single duty number, a single referral mailbox and a single referral form.

IDVAs work with clients who are deemed to be experiencing high risk domestic abuse and are at point of crisis. An IDVA's role is to carry out a thorough risk assessment and bespoke safety plan for their client based on the identified risks, needs and concerns. The IDVA will continue offering support to their client until the level of risk reduces and the client's case can either be closed or referred on to their floating support colleagues. An IDVA will support clients with:

- ongoing police investigations, ensuring the client is fully understanding the criminal process and aware of all safety measures the police can apply for and implement
- civil orders, either through solicitors or making their own application
- housing issues, whether that's approaching the local authority for emergency accommodation, refuge, liaising with housing associations or applying for sanctuary scheme in the home
- liaison with social care, children's and adults
- referring cases to and attending the daily adults' MASH meeting to discuss high risk, complex cases
- referring cases to and attending MARAC
- referring cases to Stronger Families. Attending strategy meetings, initial child protection conferences, core group meetings and working alongside the allocated social worker.
- considering wellbeing options for clients, including empowerment programmes, counselling and therapeutic remedies
- supporting clients with making applications around their finances and benefits.

Once the risk in a case reduces, the IDVA will discuss whether the client would like to be referred to one of their floating support colleagues. Floating support provide:

- continued work around any outstanding actions within a client's safety plan
- continued liaison and advocacy with services such as police, solicitors, housing, social services and benefits agencies
- assessing and addressing any additional risks or incidents
- reviewing the safety plan and implementing further safety measures if needed
- ongoing emotional support.

An IDVA's role is typically more short-term crisis intervention and a floating support worker's role is more long-term ongoing support.

When a victim of domestic abuse is at point of crisis, it can become incredibly overwhelming for them to fully grasp and understand what is happening, especially in cases where there are many professionals involved. We know from experience when clients are being given a lot of information it is not always easy for them to retain what they are being told because there is so much going on

at the same time. An IDVA's role is vital as they are able to assist in providing clarity, context, guidance and reassurance for clients. IDVAs can liaise with professionals on the client's behalf to ensure the client's voice is being heard.

IDVAs are trained and qualified and their role is to find the best way to keep clients and their children safe by assessing risk and safety planning. IDVAs must be independent in their work, client-centred and work within a multi-agency framework. Studies show that when victims of domestic abuse engage with an IDVA, there are clear and measurable improvements in the safety of both victims and their children. This includes a reduction in escalation and reduction of repeat incidents.

A floating support worker's role is equally as vital as they are involved on a more long-term basis. It is once the crisis ends that the client will see the loss of a structured professional support network. They may, at this point, become more vulnerable, more at risk of resuming the abusive relationship or entering another abusive relationship and will need their floating support worker to maintain regular contact, provide emotional support and reassurance.

The amalgamation of IDVA and floating support is an incredibly positive development for the domestic abuse provision in Hillingdon. It allows the two services to work closely together, to discuss cases, analyse risks and potential escalation of risk, share good working practices and outcomes for clients, fluidity when referring between IDVA and floating support, and consistency for clients who have trust in the service and don't have to continuously repeat themselves.

HDAAS consists of highly committed, knowledgeable and experienced IDVAs and floating support workers. Our IDVAs and floating support workers make a real difference to our clients' lives, leaving them feeling stronger, empowered and able to make informed decisions for themselves and their children.

The below chart and graph highlights a comparison of the referral figures to HDAAS for the last two years, July 2021 to June 2022 and July 2022 to June 2023



	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2021-22	60	44	67	47	60	44	62	58	66	55	75	76	714
2022-23	69	92	89	76	72	73	85	74	74	59	75	89	927

The figures show a significant increase in referrals since HDAAS began in June 2022 which is highly positive and encouraging, demonstrating awareness of HDAAS and confidence in engaging with the team for support.

HDAAS has a strong working relationship with the council's Stronger Families team and the two services have daily interaction when assessing and understanding risk levels for cases if there are children involved. The HDAAS manager has access to Children's Services records and is able to carry out checks for HDAAS team members to identify if the family are known, who the allocated social worker is, and if and what interventions have taken place. This helps contribute to all safety planning and allows for safer working practices.

HDAAS team members have also had the opportunity to shadow colleagues in Stronger Families which has helped in their understanding of thresholds and risk management.

HDAAS provides bitesize training sessions with all partners and services within and outside of the London Borough of Hillingdon. This is to ensure there is wide understanding and awareness of what HDAAS is, the role it plays, what its functions are, how HDAAS can support colleagues in their various roles and departments if they are presented with a case of domestic abuse, and inform on referral pathways and appropriate referrals. This will assist in not only raising the HDAAS profile but also strengthening working partnerships, which is vital, as domestic abuse advocacy cannot take place in isolation. To safeguard victims of domestic abuse, multi-agency working and risk management is of the utmost importance and therefore making and maintaining strong links with our partners and colleagues is essential. HDAAS has a strong foundation of multi-agency working and it is essential when safeguarding victims of domestic abuse and their children that all partners must work together to ensure positive and safe outcomes.

The below chart illustrates a breakdown of HDAAS referral figures and partners for the last year, July 2022 to June 2023. The chart not only highlights the highest referrers, it also signifies the agencies who are not referring cases to HDAAS and where future awareness raising must be focused.

	Jul 2022	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	May 2023	Jun 2023
Hospital	12	22	20	23	7	10	15	12	9	13	6	21
Adult SC	12	10	10	4	3	6	2	2	5	1	1	1
Children SC	14	12	16	16	22	17	26	16	15	18	20	31
Health visitor	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	3	0
Housing	2	3	0	2	4	1	2	4	7	1	3	1
MARAC	9	23	17	13	6	12	15	18	17	10	24	6
M/H	4	12	9	5	8	9	5	2	4	4	3	7
Out of borough IDVA	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	1
Police	5	4	3	1	5	4	9	9	4	5	7	8
Self-referral	5	3	8	8	10	8	6	6	6	5	3	9
Voluntary sector	3	1	2	0	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	1
Schools	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
GP	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
Drug and alcohol	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Probation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Friends/family	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0

Information on HDAAS can be found on the council's website along with other information around domestic abuse, useful contact details and telephone numbers for local and national organisations.

## Hillingdon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

### Children's MASH

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has a dedicated manager and is complemented by single points of contact for a range of specialist areas. Domestic abuse referrals to the MASH are risk assessed daily by police officers in the co-located MASH Police Team. The MASH has direct access to colleagues from across the council and other local, London and UK wide agencies as part of the partnership objective to keep residents safe, whilst preventing, tackling and responding to domestic abuse and its many impacts.

### Adults' MASH

A daily adults' MASH meeting takes place at midday. HDAAS plays an active part in these daily meetings by referring cases to be discussed and also providing advice and suggestions for cases that are discussed but not known to HDAAS. On occasions where HDAAS receive referrals where the clients are particularly vulnerable, the risks are high or HDAAS have not been able to make contact, referrals to this meeting provide a valuable opportunity to raise and discuss the case with other professionals, sharing information around concerns and to see which other agency or professional is already actively working on the case. It allows for immediate action plans to be formulated to address the risks shared.

## Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is an integral part of IDVA's safety planning. As IDVAs support high risk clients, their cases will be referred to MARAC. In Hillingdon, the MARAC is held every two weeks. This was increased from once a month due to the volume of cases being referred to be heard.

From April 2022 to March 2023, MARAC heard 685 new cases which is a 23 per cent increase from the previous year. Of the 685 cases heard, there were 772 children in the households who will have been impacted by or been direct victims of the domestic abuse within the home. MARAC continues to see a year-on-year increase in cases being referred for information sharing and risk management.

## Domestic Abuse Lead for Education

Hillingdon Council employs a Domestic Abuse Lead for Education. This role provides support and guidance to education providers including:

- domestic abuse training for schools and universities, including appropriate responses to disclosures of domestic abuse, immediate and longer-term safety planning advice and support
- individual case discussions detailing appropriate actions/steps to take if there are concerns for the safety of a victim/survivor and their children
- guidance and support on referrals to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- guidance and support on responding to separating/separated parents and child contact issues
- advice on when and how to refer to domestic abuse services, including Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS) and Southall Black Sisters
- guidance on Operation Encompass, how to activate, and appropriate responses to an alert. Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a



school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer (known as Key Adult) prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved. Information is shared with a school's Key Adult (Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer) prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident. This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

## Stronger Families

In August 2021, Hillingdon Council with the support of local partner agencies, launched a pioneering Stronger Families Hub across its social care services, which has enabled teams to intervene early and ensure that local families have fast access to a wide range of support services around the clock. This redesign of our early help offer and prevention for families sees teams working more effectively together, providing a locality approach to support children at the earliest possible stage by working seamlessly with partners across the borough.

The hub is a great addition to local services for local families, which will enable teams to engage families earlier and provide long-lasting solutions to ensure a safe, stable and nurturing environment in which children, young people and parents can thrive. It has a key role in how we provide support to people affected by domestic abuse.

### What is on offer through this one front door for families?

Specialist support and assistance for all children in Hillingdon, which is easily accessible around the clock, every day of the year, through:

- an online portal
- one email address
- one telephone number.

The online portal is directly linked to the child's electronic record and facilitates access to a wide range of support services including key working Locality teams, Special Educational Needs Disability and Advice Support Service, Portage, Participation Team and Adolescent Development Services as well as statutory support and protection services.

### 24 hour access to specialist support for children and families

Whilst operating all year round, the hub ensures children and their families can access support when needs arise and that practitioners have the required time to make informed evidence-based decisions rather than being confined to office hours and more 'traditional' working practices. This provides children, young people, families and professionals alike with the option to speak with a social worker at any time of day or night.

The services are much better placed and accessible, when needed.

### Right person – right time – right intervention

The initial findings from the hub are positive and indicate that the needs of children and their families are addressed by the right person at the right time to lead to the right intervention – or targeted support – in the best interests of the child or young person and their family. We remain committed to families not having to re-tell their experiences more than once to prevent re-victimisation, re-traumatisation and to avoid delays or problems in accessing the most appropriate support when needed.

Since its launch on 2 August 2021, over 25,000 requests for assistance were considered with over 11,000 of these made via the parent-friendly Early Help Assessment which can be accessed and

completed anywhere and at any time by professionals to support timely and early decision-making affecting children and young people in support of our key priorities.

### **Over 1700+ have accessed support from Stronger Families**

The Stronger Families Hub acts as the decision maker to ensure children access the right service at the right time. The ethos of the hub promotes targeted support and the timely provision of the most appropriate support service. Strong and effective working relationships with partners promotes children's best interests as well as a collaborative approach with parents, carers and professionals.

The hub seeks to be flexible and responsive to families' needs, including parents and carers who are working as well as families who experience difficulties out of office hours. The hub replicates the best of the day services whilst building the capacity of the service to meet the year-on-year increase in demand for support services from residents.

### **Whole family/think family approach**

To break the cycle of violence and abuse in a sustainable way, Hillingdon Council adopts and encourages its partners to adopt a whole family or a think family approach.

In domestic abuse cases, services can often overly focus on either victims and their children or perpetrators, and on occasions 'forcing' the individuals apart, when this is not sought by the victim and perpetrator.

This approach encourages professionals to think more holistically when dealing with domestic abuse including in cases where a victim/survivor and/or perpetrator has complex needs or has care and support needs. It ensures that professionals think about all of the family members, people in the relationship or household members when making their assessments, developing plans and making decisions.

### **The four-stage model**

#### **Step one: Think family**

This supports our approach to prevention and early intervention by understanding the relationship/household/family and the individuals involved, the situation in which they live and the relationship dynamic between the individuals.

#### **Step two: Get the whole picture and develop informed and shared understanding**

Seeing each person as an individual, as well as recognising the part they play in the relationship/household/family. It is vital to understand the strengths and areas for improvement for all the individuals involved.

#### **Step three: Develop a workable plan, that works for everyone**

New ways of achieving the best outcomes for the whole family. Only working with one family member will lead to limited short term outcomes.

#### **Step four: Check it is working. Review it, and modify where necessary**

Regular reviews will lead to better outcomes as the plan will constantly take into consideration changes, what works and areas for improvement, whilst also responding to feedback.

## The whole education approach and Operation Encompass

Whilst it is recognised that children's education starts in the home, we also recognise that one of the most troubling places a child can be is their own home. Schools are a safe haven of love, care and support for children exposed to domestic abuse in Hillingdon.

We advocate taking a whole school approach involving using a number of interventions with multiple stakeholders such as pupils, parents, teachers, governors and support staff in the school environment. The aim is to reduce the number of children and young people experiencing violence and abuse including domestic abuse. This will be achieved by raising awareness of positive engagement and relationships whilst identifying stereotypes, negative social stigma and norms in an age-appropriate way. Everyone involved will be signposted to support services and more targeted support will be provided to victims and those who may already be displaying signs of perpetration.

Teaching professionals are essential in recognising the tell-tale signs, indicators and 'red flags' that a child or children are being exposed to domestic abuse or are otherwise having physical, sexual or psychological harm inflicted upon them.

The exposure to domestic abuse will affect children in many ways including (but not limited to):

- lateness
- declining behaviour towards other students and teaching staff
- hypervigilance
- protectiveness towards younger siblings
- decline in levels of concentration – lack of sleep and lack of food.

Being alert to the domestic abuse incidents, and a child or children's exposure to them, teaching professionals can contextualise how they may present at school in the day or days following and therefore influence an appropriate intervention, which meets the children's needs.

## Commissioned Specialist Services

Hillingdon Council also commissions two specialist services to provide expert support to victims of domestic abuse.

### **Crisis Refuge Services, provided by Refuge**

This service offers accommodation and support for women and their children who are victims of domestic abuse and in crisis. Accommodation is provided for up to six months during which time the victims receive support to help rebuild their lives so they can move to longer-term, self-sustained accommodation. It is a service for people who require immediate support to secure safety whilst fleeing a high-risk domestic abuse relationship.

Refuge is a national organisation that operates the crisis refuges across the country and provides other services to domestic abuse victims.

### **Therapeutic and Counselling Support, provided by Richmond Fellowship**

This specialist service provides therapeutic and counselling support for children and young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. Support is provided on an individual basis or in age-appropriate group sessions depending on the assessment of the most appropriate support for the individual. This service has supported over 150 children and they have expanded their service offering to groups of parents too.

## Community driven solutions and 'active' bystandership

The council and its partners are wholly committed to preventing and eradicating violence and abuse in Hillingdon. However, to do this in a sustained way, the council must have the support of the wider community.

Research and experience tells us that family members, friends, neighbours, employers, co-workers and other members of the public are critical in supporting domestic abuse victims, and signposting them to support services.

To achieve our aim, we will take a multi-layered approach with various local partners, including the police and local voluntary sector organisations.

We aim to prevent domestic abuse happening in the first place. We will work with the community members to:


- raise awareness of domestic abuse and its signs, indicators and 'red flags'
- signpost victims and potential perpetrators to support services
- signpost family, friends, neighbours, co-workers and employers to advice and support
- encourage men, young men and boys to change misogynistic attitudes, discrimination and derogatory attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls.

Gender inequality, discrimination and power and control are the root causes of domestic abuse and the victimisation of women.

Men have a fundamental part to play as role models in standing up and speaking out against misogyny and discrimination against women. We are committed to working with men and boys to:

- better understand motivations and drivers relating to VAWG and domestic abuse
- decode the use of terminology used, so that men and boys have a better understanding of misogyny, sexism and discrimination of women and girls
- be role models
- know how to respond
- know how to be an 'active bystander' by taking positive action.

## Where can community members get support?

The council hosts a dedicated domestic abuse page on its website with information about support services  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/abuse](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/abuse).

## Local employers' initiative and Safe Spaces Scheme

We will continue to work with local employers as they are vitally important in raising awareness of and responding to domestic abuse. Employees spend a lot of time at work and close bonds and friendships are developed leading to potential disclosures of concerns, abuse and violence being raised.

We will continue supporting local employers, their staff and our own staff to have the confidence to recognise the signs, symptoms and 'red flags' of domestic abuse. Additionally, we want employers to create the environment and conditions, that empowers employees to speak up, to speak with co-workers or their managers and seek access to support.

Recognising the importance of places of work in providing support for victims of domestic abuse, the council worked with the Hillingdon Women's Centre, Belina Grow and The Sharan Project to deliver an initiative throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with the following outcomes:



**273**  
trained  
employees



**69**  
organisations engaged in  
the programme



**20,820**  
potential  
beneficiaries

### **WAVE training**

Welfare And Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training is a package developed to provide those working in the licensed industry with an awareness of vulnerability, their responsibilities to it and how to deal with it. The training aims to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of those working in licensed premises, focusing on identifying vulnerability and making appropriate interventions.

### **Ask for Angela**

A consumer-facing campaign which allows people who feel like they are in an unsafe situation to ask for help using the “Angela” code word, informing a staff member of their need, and allowing them to access discreet help.

## How we will assess the impact of our work

We will utilise a range of data and information to monitor how domestic abuse is changing in Hillingdon and understand the impact our work is having.

We will adopt a delivery plan setting out the specific activities we are taking to tackle domestic abuse and update this plan annually. We will report on progress on the actions within the plan with a focus on the outcomes being achieved. This plan will also include details of the data we are monitoring to measure the success of our work as it relates to the activities in the plan. Data showing the success of our work could include:

- i. numbers of reports of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls incidents to the police in Hillingdon. This includes – although not exclusively – sexual abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, modern slavery and public place sexual harassment.
- ii. numbers of repeat victims of serious domestic abuse crimes
- iii. seriousness of crimes perpetrated (violence with injury and sexual violence in domestic abusive relationships)
- iv. feedback from people with lived experience of domestic abuse on the partnership's response and support they received
- v. community confidence in our professionals and our partnership in preventing and tackling domestic abuse and VAWG crimes
- vi. numbers of perpetrators accessing support programmes to change their behaviour
- vii. perceptions on feelings of safety.

To further enhance the inclusive and informed local partnership arrangements the quality of the working arrangements will be measured through consultation and feedback.

The data outcomes from 2018 to 2021 will be used as the baseline to measure success the success of this strategy.

## Governance and accountability

Effective oversight of our actions and projects which impact on domestic abuse in Hillingdon is important to ensure that we are collectively accountable for meeting our commitments and that we are doing all we can to reduce domestic abuse and support victims.

The Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Steering Executive is the multi-agency group that develops and delivers this strategy and supporting plans. The Domestic Abuse Executive Steering Group chairperson provides a direct link to the Safer Hillingdon Partnership Board (our local statutory Community Safety Partnership with responsibility for developing plans to tackle crime and disorder in the area). These groups will receive reports from the operational multi-agency groups that coordinate work on individual cases and deliver agreed projects.

Through the Safer Hillingdon Partnership the Domestic Abuse Steering Group is connected to the Safeguarding Children Board, the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, which ensures policies and strategies are consistent and complementary.

The Domestic Abuse Steering Executive meets four times a year.

### Accountability

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) holds the statutory responsibility for the development of plans to reduce crime and disorder in Hillingdon.

The SHP has senior representation from Hillingdon Council, the Metropolitan Police Service, London Fire Brigade, National Probation Service and Integrated Care Board. The chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods Board also attends this partnership.

## What we did under our last strategy

In measuring our progress against our last strategy we undertook to use the data outcomes from 2017/18 as the baseline measurement. Our priorities and the progress made against them follow.

### To increase the reporting of domestic abuse (DA) and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) incidents to the police or other agencies

- In the three years to March 2021, there have been 9,185 DA crimes/incidents recorded by the police which compares to 7,842 DA crimes/incidents recorded between 2015 and 2018. An increase of 17 per cent.
- There were 3,165 incidents reported in 2022.

### To prevent and reduce the number of serious crimes perpetrated

- The council developed a new 'in-house' dedicated team to provide advocacy and other support to domestic abuse victims known as the Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS). The service brings together our specialist IDVAs and floating support to provide services to all victims, no matter their risk level.
- There are year-on-year increases in the referrals of high-risk cases to the Hillingdon IDVA service, meaning more victims are receiving assistance from this specialist provider. In the past three years 2,267 cases have been referred to this service.
- The council has introduced the Stronger Families Hub detailed above and which offers information, advice and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The hub is one of the first of its kind and is a single point of contact for all professionals and residents. This early help and prevention for families results in our teams adopting a multi-agency, locality approach to support children at the earliest possible stage by working closely with partners across Hillingdon in services for young people, to enable teams to intervene early and ensure that local families have fast access to a wide range of support services around the clock.
- An adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been established, which supports daily risk management meetings relating to adults at risk.
- There are also year-on-year increases to the Domestic Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference managing the threats/risks and harm to high-risk case. In the last three years 1,529 cases have been managed by this forum – an increase of 49.8 per cent on the previous comparative period.

### To increase the satisfaction of victims exposed to DA and VAWG incidents and crimes

- The feedback from victims and survivors is of critical importance to understand how well we are doing, how our services are delivered and to identify gaps in what services we deliver.
- This is a complex area which needs to be undertaken confidentially and safely over a period of time.
- This work is under development and will be included in the delivery plan for this updated Domestic Abuse Strategy.

### To increase the community's confidence in our professionals and our partnership to preventing and tackling DA and VAWG

- The partnership led the development of the Employers' Initiative and Safe Spaces Scheme in partnership with the Hillingdon Women's Centre. This initiative led to 69 local employers/organisations and 273 employees being trained to recognise the signs of abuse, how to respond and access support, 20,820 additional potential beneficiaries
- This work will be further developed in the form of the 'By-Stander Programme' which will be included in the delivery plan for this updated Domestic Abuse Strategy. This work is being led by the Prevention and Engagement sub-group.



## **To increase the early identification of perpetrators, holding them to account and working to rehabilitate them and change their harmful behaviour**

- In partnership with the Crimestoppers Trust, we led a campaign in May 2020 and March 2021 to raise awareness of domestic abuse whilst encouraging community members to report domestic abusers.
- This campaign was designed to encourage domestic abuse perpetrators to self-report and seek help.
- The campaign was focused in the areas of South Ruislip, West Ruislip, Eastcote and East Ruislip, West Drayton, Yiewsley, Yeading, Botwell, Northwood, Northwood Hills and Harefield.

### **During Phase One: Social media campaign**

- The campaign achieved the following reach across all the digital channels; There were 5,045,835 impressions, which is the number of times the content of the campaign was viewed during its operation.
- In addition, digital billboards were used on Uxbridge Road and Westbourne Parade, at fast food outlets and in Sainsbury's and Tesco's superstores advertised the campaign. As part of this outdoor campaign, the total estimated reach was 982,527 people.

### **Phase Two: Social media campaign**

- The campaign achieved 350,992 impressions (as described above).
- 10,000 Crimestoppers domestic abuse campaign information leaflets were distributed by young people engaged with the Youth Justice Service to local residents. This had the dual effect of raising the issue of domestic abuse with those young people too, and how to access support.

## **To develop a sustainable Hillingdon Coordinated Community Response**

- There is a governance, leadership and partnership structure in place with an accompanying meeting structure led by the Domestic Abuse Steering Executive (DASE), which performs the role of the Local Partnership Board, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The DASE is supported by five operational sub-groups whose membership is drawn from multi-agency organisations including local non-government organisations.
- The DASE reports to the statutory Safer Hillingdon Partnership body.

## **To further enhance the inclusive and informed partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations and our communities, which will be measured through feedback**


- Charities and independent bodies have been involved in the Domestic Abuse Partnership structure, such as the Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and Hillingdon Women's Centre.

## **Crimestoppers**

Crimestoppers is an independent charity that gives you the power to speak up to stop crime, 100 per cent anonymously.

It is available to anyone by phone and online, 24/7, 365 days a year.

 [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) and  [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org)

 0800 555 111

# Appendix A: Glossary of terms

## Types of violence against women and girls

### Violence against women and girls

Any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women. (United Nations)

### Domestic violence and abuse

A 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, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. In extreme cases this includes murder. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. (Cross-government definition introduced in 2012)

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

All procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. (World Health Organisation)

### Forced marriage

A marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where violence, threats, coercion or deception is used to force one or both parties to get married. (Section 121 Anti-social behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014)

### Honour based violence/abuse

Violence committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Women and girls are disproportionately targeted for alleged or perceived breaches of a family's or community's codes of honour or behaviour.

There is no statutory definition of honour based violence/abuse.

### Sexual violence including rape

Sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl/man/boy. It can happen anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces or social settings in the UK.

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate way. (Working to Safeguard Children [2006])

### Stalking

Repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim.

## Appendix B: Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full wording</b>
<b>ACE</b>	Adverse Childhood Experiences
<b>CR MARAC</b>	Community Risk Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
<b>DA</b>	Domestic Abuse
<b>DASH</b>	Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>DHR</b>	Domestic Homicide Review
<b>FM</b>	Forced Marriage
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>HBA</b>	Honour Based Abuse
<b>HIDVA</b>	Hillingdon Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service
<b>HDAAS</b>	Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service
<b>IDVA</b>	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
<b>MASH</b>	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
<b>MOPAC</b>	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
<b>MARAC</b>	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SHP</b>	Safer Hillingdon Partnership
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls

# Appendix C: Legal Framework

## Domestic Abuse Act 2021

In April 2021, the first statutory definition of domestic abuse, which reflected the depth and breadth of victimisation in England and Wales was published:

Section 1(1) Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act as:

- (2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if –
  - (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
  - (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following –
  - (a) physical or sexual abuse.
  - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
  - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
  - (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
  - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act amongst other areas:

- creates for the first time a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse
- for the first time defines children as victims of the domestic abuse
- provides for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- places a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales
- creates a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts
- clarifies by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death
- creates an offence of non-fatal strangulation
- enables domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing (commonly referred to as lie detector testing) as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing
- provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance
- ensures that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured short-hold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.







