



## WIGAN BOROUGH PLACE & COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2021-2024





## FOREWORD

Welcome to the Wigan Borough Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2021 to 2024. The impact of domestic abuse on the lives and well-being of residents and communities across the Wigan Borough is significant. It is essential that we work proactively in partnership to prevent Domestic Abuse from happening in the first instance. We must also ensure we provide the best possible care and support to those families effected by Domestic Abuse at the earliest possible opportunity.

Domestic Abuse is a complex social issue, and no single agency can successfully reduce its prevalence and support those in need in our Borough. With this in mind this strategy has been created with the input of our Domestic Abuse partnership and our communities. It is a commitment for agencies to work together with communities to address Domestic Abuse and achieve the best outcomes for our Borough.

Throughout the strategy we will continue to work with communities and those with lived experience to ensure our delivery of its commitments are tailored to meet the needs of our Borough.

Finally, I ask all who live, work in or visit the borough to join us in pledging that we will not tolerate or accept any form of Domestic Abuse. #LovelsNotAbuse



Cllr David Molyneux,  
Leader of Wigan Council



Cllr Paula Wakefield, Lead member  
for Equalities and Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can take place within any community. It is sometimes not clearly visible as it usually takes place within the confines of the home setting.

My staff and I are committed to working with the partnership to ensure we provide the best possible support to victims and children effected by Domestic Abuse. We will respond to incidents, investigate crime, and use all available legislation to protect victims and families from the harm of abuse. Greater Manchester Police are ready to work in partnership to support you and your families.

It is clear we all have a role to play to protect those who are vulnerable in our communities, I urge our residents not to stay silent, please reach out to support those who are struggling. Whichever agency you reach out to Greater Manchester Police are ready to work in partnership to support, you and your family.

Our services are committed to building trust and confidence in the communities we serve. These are our promises to you as the public.

Our strategy will help us drive forward key work and changes to tackle Domestic abuse in our borough.  
#LovelsNotAbuse



Chief Superintendent Emily Higham  
District Commander for Wigan and Leigh



## WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The behaviour towards person A towards another person B is domestic abuse if:

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following.



**PHYSICAL OR  
SEXUAL ABUSE**



**VIOLENT OR  
THREATENING  
BEHAVIOUR**



**CONTROLLING  
OR COERCIVE  
BEHAVIOUR**



**PSYCHOLOGICAL,  
EMOTIONAL OR  
OTHER ABUSE**



**ECONOMIC ABUSE**

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property or obtain goods or services.

A's behaviour may be behaviour towards B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at

another person (for example B's child).

Two people are personally connected to each other if any of the following applies;

- a) They are, or have been married to each other
- b) They are, or have been, civil partners
- c) They have agreed to marry each other
- d) They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether

or not the agreement has been terminated)

- e) They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- f) They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child or
- g) They are relatives.

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021  
\(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/1/section/1)



## WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE? (CONTINUED)

LOVE IS NOT  
ABUSE

### COERCIVE AND CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

**Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour** is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other acts of abuse that are used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

[Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](#)

### HONOUR BASED ABUSE & FORCED MARRIAGE

So called Honour Based Abuse is an incident of crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breached of the family and/or community's code of behaviour.

[So-Called Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage: Guidance on Identifying and Flagging cases | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](#)

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

Forced marriage is a criminal offence under The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

[Forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[For more information please refer to Wigan Borough Honour Based abuse & forced marriage protocol 2021 – click here](#)



## **RECOGNISING DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Below are some examples of Domestic Abuse.

### **CONTROLLING AND COERCIVE BEHAVIOUR    PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- Isolated away from friends and family
- Stopped from going to work or college
- Accused of flirting or having an affair
- Told what to wear, who you can see or what you should think
- Restricted in accessing and spending your own money

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Belittled and put down
- Blamed for abuse and arguments
- Made to feel like you can't leave

### **THREATS AND INTIMIDATION**

- Received threats to hurt or kill you or your family
- Had belongings destroyed
- Had your personal space invaded
- Had your emails, texts or letters read or checked

- Slapped, hit, punched, pushed, or shoved
- Bitten, kicked, or burnt
- Choked or held down
- Hit by an object thrown at you

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Pressured to have sex
- Touched in a way you didn't want to be touched
- Made to do sexual acts against your will
- Hurt during sex
- Pressured to have unsafe sex e.g., without a condom

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Crime-Emergencies/Domestic-abuse/What-is-DA.aspx>



## SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Below are some signs that may be present in those affected by Domestic Abuse

### ADULTS:

- Absence from work/social events
- Fear of the abuser
- Unexplained injuries or “accidents”
- Personality changes, becoming withdrawn or sad
- Seem afraid or anxious to please their abuser
- Receive frequent, harassing phone calls from their abuser
- Talk about their abuser’s temper, jealousy, or possessiveness
- Dress in clothing designed to hide bruises or scars
- Restricted from seeing family and friends
- Rarely going out in public without their abuser
- Having limited access to money, credit cards, or the car
- Very low self-esteem, even if they used to be confident
- Depressed, anxious, or suicidal
- Developing a drug or alcohol problem
- Abused adults may feel like they are living in **fear, isolated, trapped** and **dependant on the abuser**, experiencing **conflicting emotions** such as **fear, anger, shame, resentment, sadness** and feeling **powerless**.

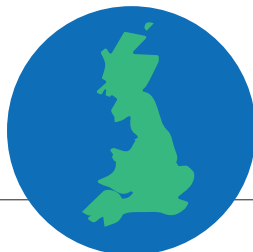
### CHILDREN:

- May become anxious or depressed
- Difficulty sleeping, nightmares or flashbacks
- Easily startled, withdrawn
- Physical symptoms: tummy ache, bed wetting
- Severe separation anxiety
- May behave much younger than they are
- Aggressive, temper tantrums
- May have a lowered sense of self-worth
- Excessively obedient
- Older children may begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves or develop an eating disorder
- Children may also feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless, or confused. They may have ambivalent feelings towards both the abuser and the non-abusing parent



## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Domestic Abuse is not determined by what race, religion, gender, age, nationality or the location you reside. However there is evidence to suggest that some people may be more at risk of domestic abuse due to some of these factors.



In the 12 months ending March 2020, in England and Wales an estimated **7.3% of women** (1.6 million) and **3.6% of men** (757,000) experienced domestic abuse.



In the 12 months ending March 2020 police recorded **758,941** (excluding GMP recorded crimes) domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales.

An increase of **9%** from the previous year .



In the 12 months ending March 2020, an estimated **2.3 million adults aged 16-74 years** experienced domestic abuse.



Of the victims discussed at MARAC's in the 12 months ending March 2021, **93.9% were women** and **6.1% were men.**

**17%.1%** of victims discussed were black, Asian or another ethnic group.



In the 12 months ending March 2021 **113,538** high risk victims and **141,024** children were discussed at MARAC meetings across England and Wales.

**33% of which are repeat cases.**



In the 12 months ending March 2020, the police to CPS charging referrals of Domestic Abuse cases fell by **19%.**

The charging rate fell to **73%.**

**78%** of CPS prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction.

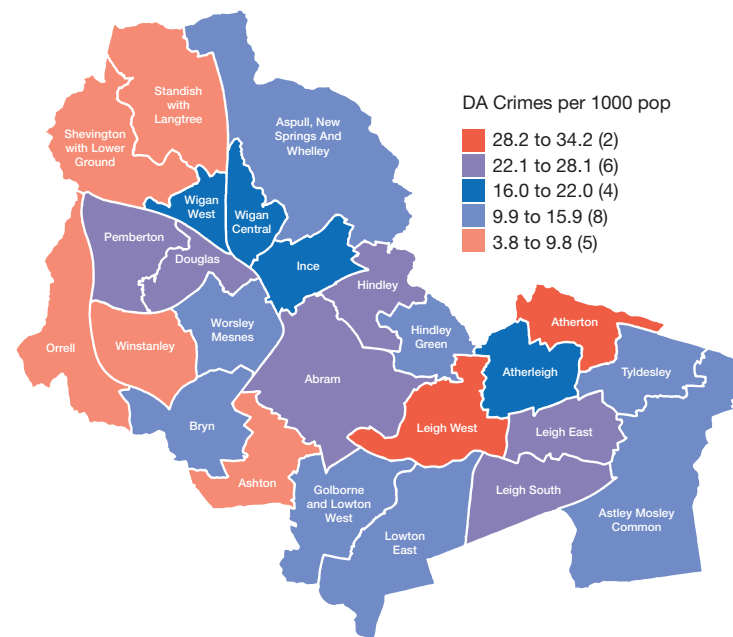


## LOCAL CONTEXT

### In the 12 Months Ending March 2021

- 68% of Domestic Abuse victims reported to the police were female. However, data from other supporting services suggest this figure is higher
- The most prevalent areas for Domestic Abuse crime were Siddow Common (Leigh), Higher Folds North (Leigh) & Hag Fold East (Atherton)
- Domestic Abuse was most significant in victims aged 25-34 and 35-44
- 19% of the victims who were placed in temporary accommodation had additional needs they were engaging with services for, other than Domestic Abuse. 75% of these complex need's cases were placed in B&B/Hotel
- Between 2016 and 2019 74% of Domestic Abuse offenders were male compared to 24% female. 25% were of these offenders were also victims of Domestic Abuse in the same period
- The most common age for offenders was consistent with the victims, being 25-34
- The most prevalent areas for Domestic Abuse are in the most

### DA Crimes by Ward (Rate per 1000 of the population)



deprived areas in the Borough, however it is acknowledged that the rate may be higher in the more deprived areas due to underreporting

What those with Lived Experience told us

“We’ve been in 3 refuges and I had to go to 7 different schools because he would find us if we stayed in one place long enough.” Natalie, aged 12  
“Leaving all of our friends...I felt

really sad. I had to miss a lot of school.” Donna, aged 14  
“I tried to guard my mum so he couldn’t hurt her.” Freddie, aged 8  
“You can get so conditioned to their actions and because it becomes so often you begin to doubt yourself and what is wrong or right” Clare.





## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



### Continued Investment in Domestic Abuse Services Across the Partnership

In Wigan we have seen a continued commitment and investment in Domestic Abuse support services. We maintain a large team of Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors and have tailored a community offer to ensure this targets early intervention, meaning all victims of domestic Abuse have an offer of support. We have invested in a dedicated Wigan helpline for victims, friends, family, and professionals who are affected by Domestic Abuse.



### Our Response during the Pandemic

During the pandemic not only did we maintain our response to those most at risk of Domestic Abuse but enhanced our offer. We explored new ways of utilising digital platforms to deliver services, an example being the delivery of our life changing recovery programmes. We also moved our multi-Agency risk assessment conference from weekly to daily meetings and held these online ensuring we respond to the needs of those most at risk efficiently, a move that will remain in place.



### Co-ordinated Community Response

Through the implementation of our new community offer – Wigan Borough Domestic Abuse Service we have built on our co-ordinated community response by ensuring services are linked into communities. Our community domestic abuse workers have created vital links with Primary Care settings. We have also committed to delivering healthy relationship sessions in educational settings. Our offer has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Helpline and frequent Domestic Abuse drop-in locations so residents can access support when needed. We have launched our Domestic Abuse awareness campaign 'Love is not Abuse' utilising advertisement campaigns to promote the helpline and help our residents recognise Domestic Abuse. We have committed to deliver training across the partnership ensuring that staff are not only aware of the signs of abuse but know how to support those effected.



## OUR VISION 2021–2024

**Our vision is that the borough will no longer tolerate or accept any form of Domestic Abuse—Love is not abuse.**

Our ambition as we move towards 2024 is to be focused on prevention and developing our Co-ordinated Community Response model to be inclusive of a proactive system wide approach that prevents domestic abuse and violence from occurring in the first place. Our vision is aspirational and where we in Wigan deem domestic abuse as being unacceptable in all its forms. Where we want people in our community to be able to live safely and have happy lives free from abuse.

We need to ensure that this model has a whole family approach at its core, ensuring families receive the support and protection they need at the right time, delivered in the right way, by the right person.

Where this cannot be achieved, we need to establish the earliest possible opportunity for intervention and in order to prevent the abuse escalating, thereby effectively protecting victims and their children whilst bringing perpetrators to account quickly. This focus provides long term sustainable reductions in violence and abuse, reduces the longer-term impact and drives down future demands and cost. We need to ensure that we bridge the gap between strategy and practice through awareness, confidence building and training.

Domestic Abuse can affect anyone at any time and its affects can stretch across families, friendship circles, peer groups and communities. It is indiscriminatory in its nature and in order to challenge this, we need to be indiscriminatory too. Removing the blockages and reasons for this behaviour being acceptable and

tolerated. Removing the blockages and reasons for not disclosing and seeking help and removing the blockages and reasons for inequalities wherever they may be.

We will work with families collaboratively to ensure they feel supported and empowered which will bring about effective change. We will do this by ensuring we take the service offer to the heart of the community with which the victim identifies. We will not only listen but we will hear the voice of the victim and families.

Our core elements for future success will be driven by individual sustainability and not just service design. This will be embedded within a robust Governance structure and developed as part of existing services as one continuous offer is crucial to future integrated working and delivery.



## EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

It brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act.

The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

It provides Britain with a discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Within the whole of this Strategy we recognise the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure we:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

We additionally recognise that under the safe accommodation duty from the Domestic abuse act 2021 outlined within this document - Victims and their children with relevant protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010 must be able to access the support that they need. Under this duty, we will take measures to ensure the appropriate and adequate support within safe accommodation is present that meets the needs of all victims including those with relevant protected characteristics.





## OUR PRIORITIES 2021–2024

### AWARENESS

#### We will :

- Improve the safety and protection of victims, children, and their families by imbedding Domestic Abuse awareness and training across all sectors
- Create and make accessible awareness and training to the Public, Private and Voluntary Sector. We will develop Domestic Abuse Policies that settings can utilise within their own staffing groups
- Aim all training at early identification and intervention with Domestic Abuse
- Have publicly accessible awareness around the signs of Domestic Abuse and where help can be sought
- Make it clear that Domestic Abuse is wrong in all its forms within communities through social mass mobilisation and culture change campaigns
- Utilise lived experience to co-design campaigns and awareness offers
- Evaluate and monitor our offer ensuring training is embedded into practice through Quality Assurance
- Continue to raise the awareness of healthy relationships at the earliest opportunity, with a focus on education settings

### SUPPORT

#### We will:

- Further develop the co-ordinated community response model, ensuring all victims of domestic abuse are given an offer of support and perpetrators are managed effectively to encourage behaviour change
- Maintain and build on flexibility within Domestic Abuse support services to meet the needs of every resident who requires support, and work to ensure that our offer is accessible to all
- Ensure our offer of support remains equal to all whom need it irrespective of protective characteristics or housing status by removing barriers to disclosure. We will maintain the voice of the victim at the centre of everything we do
- Place a focus on support being offered at the earliest opportunity to reduce the consequences of Domestic Abuse
- Ensure we design and evaluate services with those who have lived experience and work closely with communities at a very local level to seek new ways of working and to identify gaps in provision
- Encourage communities to support each other and enable confidence to utilise our services



## OUR PRIORITIES 2021–2024

### SATISFACTION

#### We will:

- Improve satisfaction throughout the whole of the victim's journey in relation to domestic abuse
- Improve data sets collected from various stakeholders across the partnership to truly capture satisfaction, so we can evaluate each part of our offer
- Link in with those with lived experience and ensure we hear their voice to design and improve future service provision
- Create a culture within services of continuous evaluation, ensuring we identify trends and gaps quickly and work to address these
- Focus on victims with protected characteristics ensuring that our services are continuously accessible
- Create an environment where professional challenge is encouraged to improve satisfaction for our residents
- Work together as a partnership to define a consistent approach in capturing satisfaction and distance travelled

### CAPACITY & ACCESS

#### We will:

- Build service capacity and improve equal access including improving our pathways with Primary Care and Education, and other key providers
- Continue to recognise that the role of Primary Care and Education settings within our communities are vital to the early identification and intervention for those affected by Domestic Abuse, this increases opportunities to access further support
- Embed a culture of selective enquiry into Primary Care and other settings ensuring that colleagues have the awareness and confidence to offer support at the earliest opportunity. Build on learning from Operation Encompass to expand this offer into Primary Care and wider
- Align our Domestic Abuse support offer to marginalised groups via a community specialist, creating strong and sustainable links for the future
- Build on established skill sets within each Neighbourhood to increase capacity and ensure equal access to our offers of support



## OUR PRIORITIES 2021–2024

### DIGITAL

#### We will:

- Improve efficiency in the delivery of service by exploring and evaluating new ways of working through the utilisation of technology
- Continue to build on the learning from the pandemic around the successful utilisation of technology to improve safe access to our services whilst driving efficiency
- Further develop and implement a digital offer of support that is safe for those residents who need it when effected by Domestic Abuse
- Develop how systems communicate with each other to enable further integration to ensure families receive the very best offer of service at every point in their journey
- Develop a data improvement plan to ensure we gather the correct data on systems to properly steer future provision by understanding needs within the borough
- Utilise those with lived experience to guide and co-design our digital offers, in particular young people and children within our borough
- Consider how digital improvements could help identify opportunities for selective enquiry across systems

### SAFETY

#### We will:

- Improve the safety and protection of victims, children and their families through the utilisation of contextual risk management with safeguarding at its core
- Learn from current perpetrator programmes to inform future need and commissioning, aligned to an embedded key worker approach to serial and repeat offenders
- Utilise improved data sets and understanding of victims needs in our borough to ensure we increase safety and reduce risk by considering all available options of safe accommodation
- Review our current target hardening arrangements to create a more equal offer to all our residents regardless of tenure, and ensure we incorporate the principles of community wealth building to deliver this offer
- Utilise all existing legal powers including criminal, civil & family jurisdictions to maximise the safety of victims and their children. This will include any future legislative powers once available





## **WIGAN COUNCIL SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2021-2024**

The following slides will relate to how Wigan Council will address the Statutory duties that are included within section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

### **CONTEXT**

Whilst the Domestic Abuse Strategy for the Wigan Borough 2021 – 2024 provides our partnership strategic aims around tackling Domestic Abuse in its widest forms, we also acknowledge that more specific information needs to be provided in line with Section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This section will outline our overall and holistic

approach to deliver a rounded offer of support to victims in safe accommodation.

This section is very much interlinked with our overall Domestic Abuse strategy and has been informed by an extensive needs assessment of our support to victims in relevant safe accommodation undertaken in 2021.

Along with our overall Domestic Abuse Strategy this section will be governed by the same model as outlined later in the document, with particular ownership sitting with the Domestic Abuse Board that has been formed in 2021.



## WHAT IS 'RELEVANT OR 'SAFE ACCOMMODATION'?

Under Statutory Guidance published by MHCLG safe accommodation is defined as the following;

### **REFUGE ACCOMMODATION**

A refuge offers accommodation and intensive support which is tied to that accommodation. Victims, including their children, have to be refuge residents to access expert emotional and practical support.

### **SPECIALIST SAFE ACCOMMODATION**

Safe accommodation specialist refuges for BAME, LGBTQ+, and disabled victims and their children [not limited to – see section B5] ,which may provide single gender accommodation with dedicated specialist support to victims who share a protected characteristic(s).

This includes services that are led by and for those that also share protected characteristics and/or have complex needs.

### **DISPERSED ACCOMMODATION**

i. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge, but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces due to complex support needs or for families with teenage sons for example.

ii. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s.



## WHAT IS 'RELEVANT OR 'SAFE ACCOMMODATION'?

### **SANCTUARY SCHEMES**

Properties with local authority installed Sanctuary Schemes or other similar schemes which provide enhanced physical security measures within a home.

A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security – 'installing a sanctuary' – to the victims' property or perimeter.

A number of local authorities run Sanctuary Schemes, working in partnership with the police to implement the scheme and any organisation working with an individual they deem suitable for sanctuary measures can make a referral to the scheme.

### **MOVE-ON AND / OR SECOND STAGE ACCOMMODATION**

Interchangeable terms for projects temporarily accommodating victims, including families who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation.

There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a permanent new home from refuge. However, move-on and / or second stage accommodation may be helpful in some cases

### **OTHER FORMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

A safe place with appropriate support. To give victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to [consider and] make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe. This would include access to wrap around support and specialist support for victims with complex needs (including mental health needs and substance misuse). An example of 'other' forms of safe accommodation would be the 'Whole Housing Approach.

Of note - Accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast accommodation are not considered relevant safe accommodation and for this reasons are specifically excluded in the Regulations.





## **WHAT IS SUPPORT WITHIN SAFE ACCOMMODATION?**

Under Statutory Guidance published by MHCLG support within safe accommodation is defined as the following;

***Domestic abuse support includes the expert help provided to all victims and their children by the specialist staff in domestic abuse support services. We recognise that some support is directly provided within refuges and safe accommodation services, and that outreach support will be provided to victims in other types of relevant accommodation, including their homes in the case of a sanctuary scheme.***

The support should be delivered by knowledgeable and/or experienced specialist providers, charities, and other voluntary organisations whose purpose is to provide support to victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse support within relevant accommodation is described as:

### **OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES WITHIN RELEVANT ACCOMMODATION**

Including, the management of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the

local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager).

### **SUPPORT WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF THE SERVICE**

For example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff)

### **ADVOCACY SUPPORT**

development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).



## **WHAT IS SUPPORT WITHIN SAFE ACCOMMODATION?**

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE PREVENTION ADVICE**

support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.

### **SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS**

- Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics (including ‘by and for’), such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and/or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims (not limited to)
- Designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support [not limited to], including sign posting accordingly.

### **CHILDREN’S SUPPORT**

including play therapy and child advocacy.

### **HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT**

Providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.

### **ADVICE SERVICE**

Including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and, Counselling and therapy (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.



## SUMMARY OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

As part of the 'Safe Accommodation' duty, Tier One Local Authorities are required to undertake an annual Needs Assessment to determine the level of demand for accommodation and Domestic Abuse support needs within their local area.

The Safe Accommodation aspects of this strategy will be reviewed annually throughout its duration in light of this.

Data for our needs assessment had been gathered from across Council Services, Greater Manchester Police and external supporting organisations along with Open-source population & demographic data as well as subject matter expertise from both internal council services and external.

Due to gaps in data across all sources used, statistics and figures across all data sets cannot be deemed to be 100% accurate.

Below are some key findings from this assessment.

- Domestic Abuse is prevalent across the Borough with rates comparable to the highest in the country. Lockdown restrictions are a possible reason for the increase in Risk levels of DA in the Borough.
- Domestic abuse Victims in Wigan, are most likely to be Single predominantly white females, aged 25-34, unemployed or in low-income households.
- DA is disproportionately impacting residents in Housing Management Areas (HMA's), with 44.57% of the Victim and DA crime location data took place within a Council Housing Management Area (HMA).
- There are two types of safe accommodation available to DA victims in the Borough, Refuge, and dispersed accommodation. A new offer of supported accommodation from Springboard Partnership, (recently introduced) will add to this portfolio.
- The Sanctuary Scheme offer within Wigan has been undertaken for some victims, however it is not consistent across all services supporting DA victims.
- 77% of DA victims who were placed in temporary accommodation were placed in B&B/hotels, which is not described as safe or relevant accommodation under the new section 4 duty.



## SUMMARY OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

- 77% of referrals to our Wigan based refuge provision are turned away, mainly due to a lack of accommodation
- There is a high demand for move on accommodation with over 10,000 individuals on the Housing Register waiting for a council house. In the past year, a lack of turnover in council stock has contributed to a lack of temporary and safe accommodation
- Future safe accommodation provision needs to be located to best reflect the high demand areas in our Borough and surrounding neighbours, as well as the varied needs where we have gaps, such as those with complex needs, single men and women and LGBTQ victims
- A wider understanding of the issues faced by DA victims when trying to place them in accommodation is crucial. The lack of safe accommodation for victims with complex needs is resulting in them being placed in unsuitable accommodation. This can result in the victim being subject to further abuse or resulting in other victims being put at risk
- 19% of the victims who were placed in temporary accommodation had additional needs they were engaging with services for, other than domestic abuse. 75% of these cases, were placed in B&B/Hotels & over half of these presented with Mental Health conditions.
- Due to certain rules within refuge accommodation some families are at risk from being separated putting them through further emotional trauma or at risk of returning to the perpetrator
- Data inconsistencies and gaps across services when recording DA victim's information has impacted accuracy of analysis. Data improvement plans across services and organisations who support DA victims must be put in place to create a consistent dataset. This will allow accurate analysis to inform decision making and improve services and the experience for DA victims





## **KEY DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE REQUESTING SAFE ACCOMMODATION DUE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

### **GENDER**

Whilst 22% of those requesting accommodation due to DA are male only 3% of those males were placed in safe accommodation in comparison to 10% of females requesting access being placed. This displays a lack of safe accommodation for both males and females however men are disproportionately impacted.

### **AGE**

The majority of those accessing these services are aged between 35-44 and 25-34. More 35-44 are placed in accommodation, both hotels and safe accommodation, despite there being slightly more demand from the younger age group.

### **SEXUAL IDENTITY**

During the reporting period, according to the data, no LGBTQ victims requesting accommodation were placed in safe accommodation but were placed into alternatives most likely due to no safe accommodation being available. Whilst figures are low for LGBTQ victims this demonstrates the lack of suitable safe accommodation which is impacting this cohort of victims.

### **FAMILY STRUCTURE**

63% of those requiring support were from single households and only 5% of these were placed in safe accommodation compared to 17% of households who had children in them. This suggests that those without children are less likely to acquire safe accommodation and are more likely to be placed in a hotel or B&B.

### **ETHNICITY**

95% of those needing support are described within the data as white. There is nothing from the data to suggest any additional barriers for any ethnic group other than the lack of accommodation that is impacting all victims.

### **COMPLEX NEEDS**

Despite gaps in data, when analysing those placed in temporary accommodation due to DA, 19% of placements had additional needs other than domestic abuse, either health, drug, alcohol, or Mental Health conditions. 75% of these complex need's cases are being placed in hotels with over half of these with Mental Health conditions.



## WHAT ARE WIGAN ALREADY DOING?

In Wigan we already have an extensive level of support for all victims affected by Domestic Abuse including those in safe accommodation. This includes:

- A local dedicated helpline for anyone requiring advice and support around Domestic Abuse. This includes victims, affected others and professionals
- 1 to1 support provided by an extensive team of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) including a Young Person's Domestic Violence Adviser (YPDVA)
- A team of Domestic Abuse community workers providing support to victims at an early intervention stage
- Drop-in Domestic Abuse support sessions at community venues across the borough
- Community Domestic Abuse links with Primary Care and Education settings allowing for selective enquiry and healthy relationships sessions
- Sanctuary Scheme provision – available to victims who remain within their own home
- Domestic Abuse counselling and group programmes for those recovering from abuse
- A daily MARAC meeting taking a multi-agency approach to those most at risk from Domestic Abuse
- Perpetrator Programmes, this includes parallel support for victims and families. We also have specific programmes for younger people who have been showing signs of abuse towards parents and carers
- An established refuge offer. This provision includes Domestic Abuse support workers, and is open to women and children and those out of borough. Residents can also be supported to access refuge outside of Wigan via our partnership offer
- A bespoke training offer provided by our Community Domestic Abuse Service available to all sectors. We also offer Domestic Abuse Awareness to all of our residents via e-learning
- A tailored awareness programme designed by those with lived experience to raise awareness of the signs of Domestic Abuse and where to seek support
- A lived experience forum we can utilise to design and evaluate services
- Wigan also use existing legislation and duties to hold perpetrators to account and support families affected by Domestic Abuse
- Victims of Domestic Abuse are considered a priority for accommodation
- An established partnership Domestic Abuse Board to oversee the lifetime of this strategy
- An extensive network of Domestic Abuse champions across the whole system
- An internal HR policy ensuring victims of domestic Abuse within Wigan council are supported

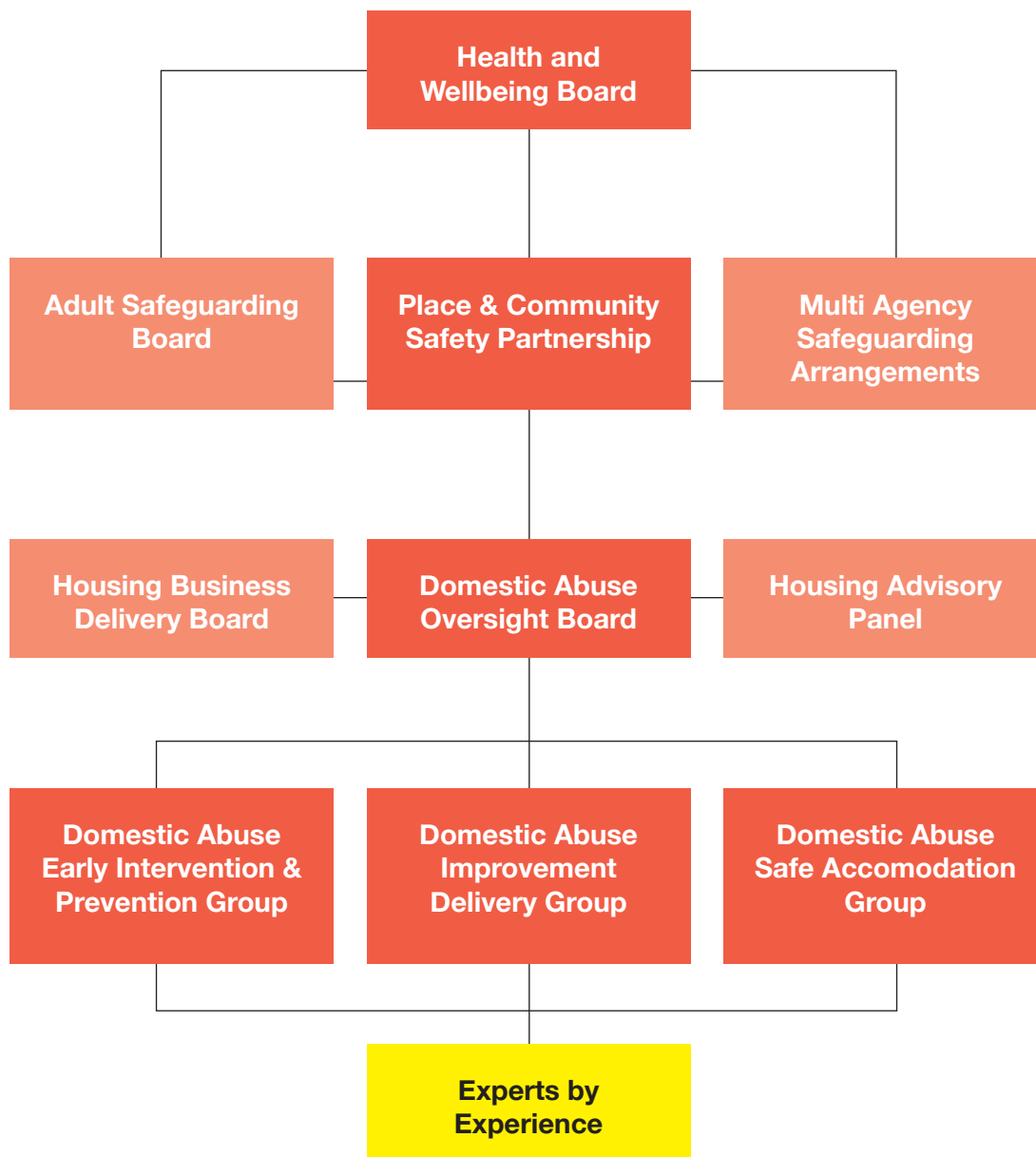


## **WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WIGAN WILL TAKE TO IMPROVE OUR OFFER FURTHER**

- Work collaboratively with both housing and support providers to increase the amount and range of accommodation with aligned support to meet local need
- Increase the amount of Local Authority Accommodation for individuals and families through acquisition and new build opportunities
- Develop new options within the private rented sector through new relationships and assistance packages
- Create new safe accommodation opportunities aligned to the Empty Homes Strategy
- Increased security and safety measures to support individuals and families to remain safely within their current accommodation
- Review existing operational processes and protocols to ensure that a seamless, coordinated and asset-based approach is provided in line with the new duties
- Undertake collaborative funding commissioning activity to ensure future services provide the greatest opportunity to increase safe accommodation
- Continue to outline the requirement for additional funding and investment to ensure adequate levels of quality support is available to meet the new duties
- Ensure our current offer of support is seamlessly aligned to those presenting as needing safe accommodation and is accessible to all that require this
- Continue to evaluate the capacity of safe accommodation and subsequent support in line with the needs of those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs
- Ensure our offer of support in safe accommodation is managed in line with local quality assurance frameworks and national quality standards
- Increase our offer of support to children in safe accommodation by creating a new role of Children's Domestic Violence Advisor (CIDVA)
- Create a post within our community Domestic Abuse service that will specialise in marginalised groups and cultural barriers
- Continue the successful roll out of our DA awareness campaign and steer this with a focus on marginalised groups



## GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OUR IMPACT



Wigan Domestic Abuse Oversight Board will have the overall responsibility for the delivery of our Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The Domestic Abuse Sub-groups Group will oversee the development and delivery of action plans and agree key performance indicators.

Both the DA oversight Boards and subgroups will remain linked in with the experts by experience group to develop actions and approaches to achieving our strategy.

A comprehensive Domestic Abuse dashboard will be maintained to evaluate key performance data that will be supplied to both the DA Oversight Board and subgroups.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Although Domestic Abuse is not a specific criminal offence, there are a number of offences perpetrators can be prosecuted for depending on the specific acts, ran in from murder, rape, and manslaughter through to assault, harassment, and threatening behaviour. There are also civil orders to protect people from harmful acts such as harassment, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Here are some examples of relevant legislation (click to visit webpage):

<a href="#"><u>Children's Act 1989 Section 47—</u></a>	Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm the authority shall make, or cause to be made such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.
<a href="#"><u>Marriage Act (1949) -</u></a>	Established the minimum age that a person can consent to marriage is 16, between 16 to 18 they may not marry without parental consent.
<a href="#"><u>Matrimonial Causes Act (1973) -</u></a>	Can make a marriage void if either party to the marriage did not validly consent.
<a href="#"><u>Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007—</u></a>	Established Force Marriage Protection Orders.
<a href="#"><u>The Anti-social behaviour and policing Act 2014</u></a>	Makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.
<a href="#"><u>The Care Act 2014</u></a>	The Care Act 2014 (Section 42) requires that each local authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom.
<a href="#"><u>Domestic Abuse Act 2021—</u></a>	Established duties around safe accommodation support and a statutory definition of domestic abuse. Also, a number of other measures including Domestic Abuse Protection orders.
<a href="#"><u>Stalking Protection Order 2020 (Stalking protection act 2019)—</u></a>	A civil order that protects victims from Stalking.
<a href="#"><u>The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Claire's Law) 2014—</u></a>	Provide victims with the information that may protect them from an abusive situation by allowing the disclosure of information about a partner's previous history or domestic abuse.
<a href="#"><u>Domestic Violence Protection Notice / Order (Crime and security act 2010)—</u></a>	Used to provide immediate protection to a victim and can last up to 28 days.



## **AVAILABLE SUPPORT**

**In an emergency always call 999**

Wigan Borough Domestic Abuse Service	Free support and advice for those experiencing Domestic Abuse in the Wigan Borough. Supports victims, families, and professionals with advice. Service offers holistic support, counselling, and recovery courses. Helpline available 8am to 7pm Mon to Fri 01942 311365 <a href="https://diasdvc.org/">https://diasdvc.org/</a>
Wigan Council Domestic Abuse Webpage	<a href="https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Crime-Emergencies/Domestic-abuse/Index.aspx">https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Crime-Emergencies/Domestic-abuse/Index.aspx</a> contains advice and further support numbers.
Forced Marriage Unit	Foreign & Commonwealth Office Anyone who is worried about being forced into marriage or is worried about a friend can call 020 7008 0151 Mon to Fri, 9 to 5pm; out of hours call 020 70081500; or email <a href="mailto:fmufco.gov.uk">fmufco.gov.uk</a> ; or visit the website <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage">www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage</a>
Honour Network Helpline	0800 5999 247
Children's Social Care	01942 828300
Adults Central Duty Team	01942 828777
Greater Manchester Police	101
LGBT Foundation	Across Greater Manchester to anyone over 16 years old who identifies under the umbrella term of LGBTQ+, including those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity = 0345 30 30 30 <a href="mailto:info@lgbt.foundation">info@lgbt.foundation</a>
The Guardian Project	A new and innovative pilot across Greater Manchester to coordinate care and support for girls and young women (up to 21 years old) affected by or at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Telephone: 07449 651 677 Email: <a href="mailto:guardian.project@outlook.com">guardian.project@outlook.com</a>
National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hours):	0808 200 0247
Wigan Council Housing Options Team	For advice on your housing situation if you're experiencing domestic abuse—01942 487717

## SOURCES:

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020 Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[National MARAC Dataset Latest MARAC National Dataset | Safe lives](#)

Wigan Council Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment 2021

GMP Crime and Incident Data

[19/20 Domestic abuse in England and Wales - Data Tool Domestic abuse in England and Wales - Data Tool - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Board	Board Date of Endorsement
Wigan Domestic Abuse Partnership Board	03/11/2021
Wigan Place & Community Safety Partnership Board	27/01/2022
Wigan Adult Safeguarding Board	23/11/2021
Wigan Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements	09/11/2021

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	August 2021	Initial Draft
2.0	Sept 2021	Format Changes and Accessibility Checks
3.0	Dec 2021	Changes made from Consultation with Boards
4.0	Dec 2021	Draft Published
5.0	Jan 2022	Final Document published

### TO FIND OUT MORE PLEASE CONTACT OUR TEAM ON:

Write to:

Wigan Place and Community Safety Partnership  
C/O PSR Hub  
Wigan Police Station  
Robin Park Road  
Wigan  
WN5 0UP