

**KNOWSLEY
DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY
(DRAFT)**

OCTOBER 2021



Knowsley Council



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Foreword

Cllr Shelley Powell, Knowsley's Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods:

As the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhood and The Chair of The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board I am pleased to share with you the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022- 2024.

Domestic Abuse has a devastating impact on our residents, their families and friends and the wider community.

It has no place in Knowsley, and with our partners we are saying No More.

In Knowsley we are dedicated to tackling domestic abuse ensuring victims and potential victims know how to seek support to stop the cycle of abuse. We are committed to improving the welfare and safety of our residents to ensure everyone can thrive and succeed in life.

We already have an established partnership with a shared goal of tackling domestic abuse.

In this strategy we set out our priorities to provide multi-agency support to victims, children, families, communities, and perpetrators.

Together we are building better and safer communities.

Introduction - What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is a significant national and local issue, having a major impact upon those directly affected and their families. Domestic abuse has significant short- and long-term impact on victims and their families, this includes physical injuries, mental health issues, and behavioural issues and can lead to substance misuse, self-harm, and suicide.

Domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents on the part of the abuser, which is controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent, including sexual violence. In the majority of cases the perpetrator of domestic abuse is a partner or ex-partner, but can also be a family member or carer or when two people are “personally connected” to each and when both parties are 16 and over

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, background, gender, religion, sexuality, or ethnicity. However, statistics show most domestic abuse is carried out by men and experienced by women. In the year ending March 2020, it is estimated that 1.6 million females and 757,000 males aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse, with more women killed as a result of domestic abuse than men.

Domestic abuse is never the fault of the person who is experiencing it.

It can happen at any point in a relationship, including when a relationship has ended. Anyone forced to change their behaviour because they are frightened of their partner or ex-partner’s reaction is experiencing abuse. **Domestic abuse is a crime.**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act became law. This is a significant piece of legislation, impacting on how local authorities deliver support for survivors and their children.

The Act creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse, extending beyond physical abuse to include coercive and controlling behaviours, emotional and economic abuse, as well as placing a legal duty on councils to secure safe accommodation for all domestic abuse survivors that need it.

For the first time, the definition of **coercive and controlling behaviours will be expanded to include abuse in which perpetrators and victims are no longer in a relationship.** The Act also identifies children impacted upon by domestic abuse as victims.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has established a legal and statutory definition of domestic abuse. The definition of domestic abuse outlined in the Act is focused on two central areas; the first being the personal relationship between an abuser and a victim, and the second defines what kinds of behaviour constitutes abuse.

The Act sets out a broad range of behaviours which may constitute domestic abuse and which may occur as a single incident or a pattern of behaviour over time. These include

- Physical violence and abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviours
- Female genital mutilation
- Honour-based violence and forced marriage

The aims to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that agencies will do everything possible to support them and their children and pursue the perpetrator, this will be achieved via several measures with the overarching aim to:

- Ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes and creating a domestic abuse definition in law.
- Promote awareness and improve performance and to put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda.
- Raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families.
- further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies

For the first time, the law has included economic abuse as a form of domestic abuse, where this impacts on a victim's ability to "acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain good or services".

In defining the relationship between a perpetrator and a victim, the criteria states that they must be "personally connected". This definition now allows for different relationships to be captured and recognised as domestic abuse, including for the first time, ex-partners, and family members.

The Act introduces new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, which will help prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as requiring them to take positive and responsible steps to change their behaviour.

The 2021 Act also makes clear that a person cannot consent to the infliction of serious harm for the purposes of obtaining sexual gratification (frequently referred to in this context as the 'rough sex defence').

In addition, new laws are now in place which have made non-fatal strangulation a specific offence, and we have widened the law on 'revenge porn' to make threats to share intimate images an offence.

Both nationally and in Knowsley, domestic abuse is largely perpetrated by men and boys against female partners or ex-partners. However, we recognise that domestic abuse occurs in many different forms and within different familial settings. This can include:

Violence and abuse against parents

There is increasing recognition that young people do perpetrate violent and abuse behaviours towards their parents which can often be a feature of families with more complex needs, and often requires involvement from Children's Social Care.

Abuse of older people

Older people can and do experience domestic abuse, often perpetrated by an adult family member or carer. Research carried out by SafeLives estimates that older victims aged 61+ are significantly more likely to have support needs, care needs or a disability, and as such, are less able to protect themselves from harm. Elder abuse is often perpetrated by an adult family member and can also occur in institutional settings such as long-term care facilities.

Same-sex couples

Domestic abuse among same-sex couples is a serious and growing issue and those who identify as LGBT+ often face additional barriers to accessing support that can arise, due to their gender identity or sexual orientation. Evidence indicates that LGBT+ victim-survivors are not accessing services at the same rate as others in the population. Research from SafeLives suggests that by the time they do access support, LGBT+ victims are presenting with more complex needs and higher levels of risk.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner On 8 September 2019, Nicole Jacobs was appointed as the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, this appointment ensured that the crucial work of the Commissioner could begin and was an opportunity to test the model before it was codified in law in 2021 by The Domestic Abuse Act. The act places duties on specified public bodies and Government Ministers to cooperate with and respond to the Commissioner's recommendations.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is tasked with **encouraging good practice in preventing domestic abuse**; identifying victims and survivors, and perpetrators of domestic abuse, as well as children affected by domestic abuse; and improving the protection and provision of support to people affected by domestic abuse. The role is to provide accountability to the public and the government on practice relating to Domestic Abuse.

The importance of addressing the impact of Domestic Abuse.

The Social Impact of Domestic Abuse

The Office for National Statistics suggests that an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 - 74 have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, equating to a prevalence rate of 5-7% of adults in England and Wales, with women twice as likely as men to experience domestic abuse. Domestic abuse in Knowsley is widespread with 17% of all police callouts recorded as a domestic incident. It is also one of the primary drivers of Children's Social Care interventions. Although data gives an indication of likely prevalence, domestic abuse is a hidden crime that victims will live with, on average, for 3 years before seeking help or support. It is more than likely, therefore, that domestic abuse will be far more prevalent in Knowsley, and nationally, than is currently understood or reported.

Domestic abuse can have a devastating and long-term impact on a victim and their children. Many victim-survivors experience a range of negative, long-term impacts on their health and wellbeing and outcomes. Victims who have been subject to abuse often report significant detrimental impacts on their self-esteem, mental wellbeing, and economic and employment prospects, among others.

For the children of victims, witnessing domestic abuse in the family home can be a hugely traumatising and distressing experience which has a long-lasting impact across a range of outcomes. Children who witness domestic abuse or experience it themselves are at serious risk for long-term physical and mental health problems. The way in which a child develops is shaped by the relationships they experience from the moment of conception and birth. We know that early exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences such as domestic abuse fundamentally alters how a child's brain develops and will ultimately shape their emotional and behavioural development. Children who have experienced domestic abuse are far more likely to have poorer outcomes at school and experience poor mental health or behavioural difficulties. Anecdotal evidence suggests that experiencing domestic abuse as a child shapes their relationships as an adult, with children who have witnessed domestic abuse more likely to experience domestic abuse as an adult, either as a perpetrator or a victim.

The Financial Impact of Domestic Abuse

Home Office research demonstrates that domestic abuse does not only have an individual impact, but also has a significant economic and social cost, estimated to

be approximately £66 billion across England and Wales. This includes the significant cost on public services, such as policing and criminal justice, health, and Children's Services. As well as this, there are costs associated with lost output relating to the time victims will take off work and reduced productivity afterwards. We also know that victims and their children often require intensive support from local agencies to deal with the significant emotional and physical harm suffered by victims.

Domestic abuse is not a single time-limited event, and the repeated and ongoing nature of domestic abuse makes it difficult to measure the precise number of incidents involved with any one family. A recent Home Office research report in 2019 examined the Economic and Social Cost of Domestic Abuse and provides information in relation to the cost associated to individual victims and the harms they will suffer during their period of abuse. The average length of abuse for a victim is three years (SafeLives, 2018). During the period of abuse several offences can repeatedly occur. In the year ending 31 March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales.

The Home Office research report in 2019 estimated that the unit cost for an average domestic abuse victim is £34,015. The most extreme cost is that of domestic homicide, which has an estimated unit cost of £2.2 million arising from the cost of harms, health services and lost output.

The wider costs of domestic abuse are estimated to cost the UK around 66 billion pounds per year.

If the figure £34,015 is applied to the current levels of referrals to advocacy support (low, medium, and high risk) (n. 2014) then the overall costs for victims of domestic violence in Knowsley exceed **£68** million pounds per year.

However, if we apply the projected figures of 2,600 victims by 2024/25, this will result in the overall cost for Knowsley victims at **£88.4** million pounds per year.

Tackling and responding to domestic abuse is everyone's business and that is why, in Knowsley, the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board takes a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and is one of the council's key priorities

National policy context

The Domestic Abuse Act, which became law in April 2021, is the culmination of the increasing awareness and understanding of the devastating and long-term impact of domestic abuse on the lives of victim-survivors and their children.

For many years, the discourse around domestic abuse focused largely on physical violence in the home perpetrated by a man against a female partner. However, over recent years, campaigners, charities, and politicians have sought to shift the discourse

to facilitate a deeper understanding of the nuances within domestic abuse and the characteristics of intimate partner violence that go beyond physical abuse.

In 2015, the Government sought to close the gap in legislation and ensure that sustained patterns controlling behaviours that pervade abusive relationships are criminalised in law. The amendment to Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of **controlling or coercive behaviour** in an intimate family relationship, demonstrating a step-change in our understanding of, and response to, domestic abuse.

In 2016, the Government published its strategy for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2016-2020) setting out the key priorities as reducing the number of women and girls experiencing violence, holding perpetrators to account, and focusing resources on delivering early intervention approaches. In 2017, the government pledged to bring forward legislation to protect victims of domestic abuse during the Queen's Speech.

In July 2021, the Government launched its cross-departmental Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy which sets out how the government intends to respond to, and prevent violence against women and girls, including their ambitions to increase the levels of support available for survivors and their children and hold perpetrators to account. The strategy has a broad remit and attempts to tackle the crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls and the pervasive societal attitudes and prejudices which underpin these crimes; however, its implementation is fundamental to how we respond to and prevent domestic abuse as we know that domestic abuse is a highly gendered crime with women overwhelmingly victims and perpetrators overwhelmingly men. We know that the approach outlined in the VAWG Strategy – which includes looking at how we tackle the norms and beliefs that justify violence – will also be central to how we respond to domestic abuse in our communities. The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021 will complement the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Government's Domestic Abuse Strategy allowing for a "once in a generation" opportunity to implement real change in reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls and a large part of this will be to reduce domestic violence offences, improve support and response for victims.

The aims of the strategy include

- ***Increasing Support for Victims*** – ensuring the highest quality support services are in place and always appropriate to individual need
- ***Increasing the number of Perpetrators brought to Justice*** – This includes reducing the proportion of victims withdrawing from the Criminal Justice system
- ***Reducing the Prevalence of violence*** – Preventing more of the crimes occurring in the first instance and reducing the number of repeat victims of violence

In Knowsley, the VAWG Strategy will run alongside the Domestic Abuse strategy to ensure that the best services and support are implemented at all stages of the process to ensure victims of domestic violence are supported to the highest standards.

Other key Policy, Legislation and Strategy

- In 2015, domestic abuse was added to the Care Act 2014 as an adult safeguarding category in recognition of those victims who have care and support needs that limit their ability to protect themselves.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - It sets out the legal duties you must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in schools and colleges.
- In 2018, the Government published the statutory guidance, "Working Together to Safeguard Children". The guidance replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with Safeguarding Partners, placing a legal duty on local councils, the police and clinical commissioning groups to work together within their locality to safeguard and protect children. The guidance also placed a duty on councils and CCGs to undertake Child Death Reviews.
- Female Genital Mutilation is a criminal offence. It is also illegal to aid, abet, counsel, and procure the performance of FGM on a UK national or permanent resident abroad
- In 2018, the Government published the statutory guidance, "Working Together to Safeguard Children". The guidance replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with Safeguarding Partners, placing a legal duty on local councils, the police and clinical commissioning groups to work together within their locality to safeguard and protect children. The guidance also placed a duty on councils and CCGs to undertake Child Death Reviews.
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance sets out guidance for local authorities on the provision of homelessness services to people who have experienced or are at risk of domestic abuse, including determining priority need, preventing, and assessing homelessness and relief duties.
- The Statutory guidance improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse sets out how local authorities should ensure victims living in safe accommodation are given appropriate priority when they apply for access to social housing
- The 2021 National Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls' statement of expectations sets out what local authorities and their partners need to put in place to ensure an effective and robust response to violence against women in girls in their local area

The Covid-19 Pandemic and impact on Domestic Abuse

Nationally, we know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on domestic abuse. By its nature, domestic abuse is a hidden crime taking place largely at home and is often not reported. The restrictions on movement during the pandemic saw people largely confined to their homes and isolated from support networks such as family, friends or the workplace, compounding exposure to violence and abuse. National data from the ONS shows an increase in demand for victim support services during the pandemic, with Refuge confirming that monthly contacts to their helpline increased by 60% from the previous year.

Although the full impacts of the pandemic are yet to be fully understood, we know that increased levels of domestic abuse in Knowsley is likely to impact on the provision of local services in the immediate term, for instance on primary care, policing and mental health support services and children's safeguarding and early help services. However, the costs associated with domestic abuse are not only confined to the immediate policing or health response. We also know that living with domestic abuse can create damaging, intergenerational impacts on victims and their families. Victims are more likely to suffer from mental health problems, less likely to be in secure employment and are at a higher risk of housing instability. Children who have witnessed or experience abuse are less likely to secure good outcomes as they move through their life and are at greater risk of experiencing the long-term impacts of trauma. All this places considerable and cumulative cost pressures on public services.

Knowsley Strategic Framework

Local Policy Context

Domestic abuse is a cross-cutting policy area which impacts on a range of council and partner services therefore, an effective response is reliant on a strong, partnership approach. Those who experience domestic abuse are more likely to suffer from a mental health problem and there are strong links between domestic abuse and substance misuse.

Poverty and financial control by the perpetrator are strongly associated with domestic abuse and can often prolong exposure to abuse due to the financial consequences associated with leaving a perpetrator. We also know that children who are exposed to domestic abuse can experience poorer outcomes throughout the course of their lives, across health, education, and employment.

The Knowsley 2030 Strategy

The Knowsley 2030 strategy sets the strategic direction for the council and partners over the next ten years. Knowsley 2030 was developed in tandem with our Better Together partners, residents, businesses, and community groups to understand what life is like for people in Knowsley, what challenges the borough is facing, and how we can best enable communities to build upon their strengths. This was a comprehensive piece of insight and intelligence gathering which has culminated in the publication of the Knowsley Now evidence base. This evidence base, which will be reviewed and

updated throughout the life course of the strategy, provides the basis for the borough's strategic priorities, three of which are directly related to the domestic abuse strategy:

- where strong and safe communities can shape their future.
- where people are active and healthy and have access to the support they need.
- where people of all ages are confident and can achieve their full potential.

Children and Families Plan 2021-2024

Knowsley's Children and Families Plan 2021 – 2024 sets out the strategic direction for Children's Services over the next three years. Two of the three priorities outlined in the plan directly relate to the domestic abuse strategy. One of the key deliverables set out in the priority – prevention – will focus on reducing and responding to the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, including domestic abuse. We recognise the need to provide practitioners with trauma-informed training to build positive and trusting relationships with children and young people, and their families, and to increase workforce understanding how exposure to domestic abuse can impact on behaviour and outcomes. We also acknowledge the fundamental role that parents have in shaping and supporting good outcomes for children and that children who grow up in happy and stable environments generally experience more positive long-term outcomes. Therefore, our plan will focus on reducing parental conflict and domestic abuse, issues we know to be prevalent in Knowsley, enabling children to grow up in healthy and supportive families.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025

The health impacts of this policy are largely positive as the policy seeks to reduce the numbers of domestic abuse incidents but also to provide robust, trauma led support packages for those who are victims or witness abuse. The strategy also acknowledges the need to consider the needs of perpetrators in relation to their mental health and possible substance misuse issues.

A key strength of the strategy is the holistic partnership working approach as clearly domestic abuse impacts various aspects of life. The strategy prioritises a 'coordinated systematic joined up approach' which should help to reduce health inequalities in Knowsley. These are both the health inequalities which can lead to domestic abuse being more prevalent and those which arise as a result of abuse.

Community Safety Partnership and Strategy 2021-2023

Significant work has been undertaken to address the risks and challenges that were highlighted in the 2019/20 strategic threat assessment and Community Safety Plan regarding Domestic Abuse. Partners have conducted a review of domestic abuse governance within the borough and have developed and implemented a revised governance structure and accountability through the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

Knowsley CSP has approved and supports an approach to domestic abuse that promotes early intervention and ensures that an offer is in place for everyone affected by domestic abuse, regardless of risk level. Together with Knowsley's pathway for children and its approach to supporting and challenging offenders it demonstrates the ongoing commitment and impact of the multi-agency response.

Through the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, the Community Safety Partnership will:

- Continue to monitor and review the support pathways available for both victims and perpetrators to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and effective
- Work with partners to ensure that they are aware of the responsibilities and referral pathways
- Ensure greater use of data and performance to inform and allow for a more robust strategic planning of service need
- Implement the statutory duties and approaches as outlined within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Domestic Abuse Governance in Knowsley

Responsibility for support for vulnerable victims and adult offenders of domestic abuse falls within the remit of the Communities and Neighbourhoods portfolio. The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership via The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is responsible for overseeing the coordination, offer and discharge of domestic abuse services and support to those who have experienced domestic abuse, this includes support to victims (including children affected by domestic abuse) and the challenge/prosecution/rehabilitation of offenders.

Domestic Abuse is an issue impacting upon services and organisations across Knowsley and as such there are strategic links and cross cutting priorities with across The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, The Knowsley Children's Safeguarding Partnership, The Knowsley Early Help Partnership, The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership, The Knowsley Health and Well-being Board and The Knowsley Adults Safeguarding Board.

The Domestic Abuse Act places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities in England to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to perform certain specified functions in relation to Domestic Abuse. The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was established in May 2021. The Board supports the Council and provides strategic oversight on the issue of Domestic Abuse in Knowsley and reports back to The Community Safety Partnership, The Council and Government on delivering the duties in line with statutory guidance. The Board performs certain specified statutory functions, and these are to:

- Assess need of Domestic Abuse victims and their children
- Review service provision for domestic abuse and safe accommodation (what we have and what we need)
- Prepare for assessment and strategy development
- Review commissioning arrangements and investments in domestic abuse services

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Priorities 2021-2024

- The Board will support the Knowsley Better Together principles to ensure that there is collaboration and coordination across all partners.
- Establish strategic leadership and effective partnership working to embed the role of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board within the local area so that services for those impacted upon by domestic abuse continue to improve.
- To further strengthen performance monitoring and key performance indicators so that the impact of domestic abuse interventions can be understood; the effectiveness of services in meeting need measured and improvements identified.
- To implement workforce development strategy, including the commissioned training offer, so that knowledge and understanding of parental conflict and domestic abuse improves rapidly; resulting in timely identification of need; improved assessment of risk and better targeting of services.
- Support the council to effectively engage with domestic abuse victims and expert services in understanding the range and complexity of needs.
- The Board will hold partners to account for the delivery of the actions contained within the delivery plan of the Strategy.

The Current Domestic Abuse offer in Knowsley

Specialist Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support

When domestic abuse is identified there is a need to understand the risk to the victim from the abuse. Knowsley has adopted the MeRIT (Merseyside Risk Indicator Tool) to assess risks to victim. MeRIT risk assessments are undertaken by a range of professionals and indicate whether a victim is assessed as Gold (high risk), Silver (medium risk) or Bronze (low risk).

The Knowsley Partnership support the view that earlier intervention leads to improved outcomes for victims and their families, and that early intervention will reduce re-victimisation and re-offending rates within borough. To establish this, in 2015 Knowsley invested in establishing an aligned response to domestic abuse which has seen the establishment of a victim/survivor pathway (16+) which ensures that, when referred, victims of domestic abuse are offered support, regardless of their risk level (low, medium, and high).

Knowsley Council's Safer Communities Service offers Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support to **low and medium** risk victims of domestic abuse who are referred to the service by Police or other professionals. Operating a case management model, the advocates will seek to work with adult victim survivors to offer bespoke victim support over, offering earlier intervention, work directly with the victim/survivor to identify risk factors and create a safety plan to address, manage and reduce their and any identified child risk, whilst increasing their safety. The service has strong links across the partnership and works with partners to champion a victim led response to domestic abuse.

Operation Enhance is a partnership between Knowsley Council's Safer Communities Service and Merseyside Police, launching in 2019. Victims of Domestic Abuse are jointly visited by a Police Officer and a Safer Communities Domestic Abuse Advocate in the days following a Domestic Abuse incident. The overarching aim is to provide a joint response to victims of Domestic Abuse following a police officer call for service (low and medium risk). The process captures the user voice, provided an immediate opportunity to offer safety planning and risk reduction with the victim, identifies immediate child or adult safeguarding concerns or support needs. It also enables Merseyside Police to gather appropriate information and offer the victim immediate Domestic Abuse Advocate advice and guidance in relation to the next step in accessing support or continuing with the criminal justice system.

Referrals and source Low and Medium Risk Contacts

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Following police call to service	658	1046	881	1048	1138
Other Professional referral	37	37	65	112	158
Total	695	1083	946	1160	1296

Knowsley Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) High Risk Offer: Knowsley's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meets fortnightly to discuss any new cases, agree actions and review previous cases to ensure appropriate support is in place to reduce risks to individuals referred. Recent investment in the MARAC process means that meetings and information sharing are operated via a secure web-based system enabling more timely recording and information sharing. Agencies work together to consider the wishes of the victim, options for keeping individuals safe in their own home and powers that can be used to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

Number of Referrals to MARAC per financial year

MARAC Referrals	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
High risk MARAC referrals	370	366	535	519	530

Breakdown of identified protective characteristics per financial year

protective characteristics	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
BAME	8	8	22	23	21
LGBTQ+	1	0	0	0	6
Disability	1	1	0	0	8

MARAC Gender breakdown per financial year

Gender	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Male	6	6	11	8	15
Female	364	360	524	511	515

The First Step Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy (IDSVA)

Service: Grant aided by Knowsley Council, The First Step Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy (IDSVA) Service provide the offer of support to **High-risk** victims of Domestic Abuse, this response is for victim/survivors assessed as at high risk of serious injury or murder. High risk victims are referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). IDSVA's work directly with the victim/survivor to identify risk factors and create a safety plan to address, manage and reduce their risk whilst increasing their safety. IDSVA's typically provide short to medium term case work focusing on the victim/survivors, and any children's, safety. Support is provided relevant to each individuals own situation and needs. Referral is via the MARAC which any agency can refer into using the MERIT risk assessment process which includes professional judgement.

The figures below provide an overview of the number of clients that IDSVA Service have working with in the last two financial years, their engagement and numbers supported through both civil (family) and criminal court process.

IDSVA	2019/20	2020/21
Number of referrals to IDSVA Service	506	477
Number of referrals contacted	389	351
% Of referrals contact established	77%	74%
Number of referrals engaging	295	253
% Contacted referrals engaging	76%	53%
% Of ALL referrals engaging	58%	72%

Court Support Provided to Victims	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of clients supported through criminal Court System	338	334	179
Number of clients supported through Civil/Family Court System	94	107	152

Knowsley's Self-Referral Pathway: In addition to the professional referral pathways outlined above, Knowsley has The First Step, a Voluntary Specialist Domestic Abuse Agency who support victims of domestic abuse through a self-referral pathway.

The First Step Project is a community-based service which works only with people who self-refer into our service and are assessed at low to medium risk. Support offered is tailored to the needs of each individual who contacts us and can be via face to face, phone, drop in and outreach. Support offered can be emotional and practical with an emphasis on listening to and believing the victim/survivor, providing information to assist in their decision making and working with people at their pace. They also offer group work including the Freedom Programme, Hope to Recovery and more informal moving on groups. The First Step, provider the Women's Refuge Service, through the Councils current commissioning arrangements. People can access the service by ringing 0151 548 3333 or emailing enquiries@thefirststep.org.uk

The data below outlines the referral numbers to The First Step Project and the interventions provided within the last two financial years.

The First Step Project Referrals

	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total Referral's	160	188
Interventions:		
Engaged Clients	125	133
More Than 1 contact	135	126
Short Term Work	37	40
Groups completed	51	38
1-1 sessions	110	202
Referred to other agencies	158	580

As part of the holistic response, in 2020/21 clients engaged with The First Step Project had opportunity to access therapeutic support, the table below illustrates the numbers:

Total clients accessing therapeutic support	260
Clients with mental health issues	75
Clients with additional needs	49
Clients supported through Criminal Justice System	136

Overall Community Advocacy Support in Knowsley:

The table below outlines the overall referrals to advocacy support services in Knowsley within the last two years.

Referral to Advocacy Support in Knowsley all services	2019/20	2020/21
Safer Communities Service Low and Medium Risk	1160	1296
The First Step IDVA Service High Risk MARAC	519	530
The First Step Self Referred Clients	160	188
Total	1839	2014

Domestic Abuse Group Work – The Freedom Programme: What is Freedom? It is not therapy - it is a group work programme that examines the roles played by perpetrators, the attitudes and beliefs of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors. It is not a quick fix for everyone, it works best when it is delivered at the right time for the woman in a group work environment. Its aim is to help women to make sense of and understand what has happened to them as a result of an unhealthy relationship and identify the warning signs for any future relationships.

The Freedom course describes in detail how children are affected by being exposed to domestic abuse and very importantly how their lives are improved when the abuse is removed. The learning identifies both physical and emotional risks to children.

Police and other criminal justice agencies deploy a range of tools and powers, which includes but is not limited to: Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Notices, Non-Molestation Orders, Integrated Offender Management, and promotion of Claire's Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme). By deploying these duties, victims can be supported to remain in their own homes.

Dedicated Children's Pathway

Recognising the devastating impact that witnessing Domestic Abuse can have upon the wellbeing of children Knowsley's Children's Services have developed a local Children's Pathway utilising the DARIM process. This means that children will have access to emotional and wellbeing support appropriate to their individual needs.

Operation Encompass: Operation Encompass aims to support children, by ensuring police communicate directly with schools to inform them that an incident of Domestic Abuse has happened in a child's home enabling schools to provide appropriate emotional and wellbeing support to the child.

Direct support to children via Targeted and Specialist services: Those families who are open to Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care will also receive support via the lead practitioner or family support worker. This will involve safety planning for children to enable them to identify and recognise the abuse in the home, understand it is not their fault and enable them to keep themselves safe if an incident occurs.

Listening Ear therapeutic interventions for children: Direct therapeutic work and group work sessions are provided to children who have been impacted upon by Domestic Abuse. A DARIM risk assessment is completed to identify risks and needs of the child. The provider of the service demonstrates the impact and difference the programme has made to the child upon completion of the programme.

Listening Ear therapeutic interventions for children (Schools): Schools can refer children who have witnessed or been part of domestic abuse for counselling sessions. These sessions can take place in school or remotely depending on the needs of the child.

Mental health support worker: All Knowsley secondary schools and most Knowsley primary schools also have access to a mental health support worker in the school setting. These workers can be used for immediate support for children.

Me Time: Services or individuals can refer children to access Me Time sessions run by Vibe. The sessions support young people who may require support if they have a caring role with a family member, or if they are vulnerable due to family substance misuse issues, have experienced domestic abuse or have a parent or carer suffering mental health issues or illnesses.

What Interventions and processes do we have to hold perpetrator to account and support the behaviour change process?

Recognising that to address the issue of domestic abuse those responsible need to be held to account for their behaviour Knowsley have invested in establishing a dedicated perpetrator pathways for non-statutory perpetrators that runs alongside those statutory interventions delivered by The Probation Service.

Knowsley Council's Choices Pathway: Safer Communities Service will work with residents who have been identified as being abusive to their partner and aim to help them to admit to disrespectful beliefs, why they have those beliefs, and assist them **IF** they wish to gain insight and change their behaviour. Safer Communities Service will always start from the position that behaviour classified as being abusive is a **choice**, which can stop if the client indicates they are ready. The target group are a **non-statutory** perpetrator, interventions encompass challenge and support, to ensure that perpetrators are educated and supported to change their behaviours to prevent re-offending and re-victimisation. The offer includes 1:1 behaviour change support and attendance on group programmes. The pathway has additional expertise to respond to the complex support needs of those referred including substance recovery and therapeutic intervention. Central to our approach is the victim/survivor and when present child safety as such the pathway has identified funding to put in place a **dedicated** parallel support service with victim/survivors. The project development will also look to work with Children's Services and Youth Offending Service to improve the response for younger aged perpetrators through early intervention and prevention in the community, dedicated case management and programmes for 16–21-year-olds and educational programmes such as healthy relationships.

The table below illustrates the referral figures to the Safer Communities Service Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Pathway since 2016.

Perpetrator Referrals	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2020/21	2020/21
Referrals	26	30	63	55	71

Multi-Agency Task and Coordination (MATAC) is a risk assessment conference targeted at serial and repeat perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. The aim of a MATAC is to safeguard and protect victims and children, through the support and challenge of domestic abuse perpetrators. This will be achieved via a partnership response to behaviour change programmes and where necessary partnership approach to enforcement. The objective is for partners to work together to offer support and challenge the offender to change their behaviour, reduce re offending and prevent harm to their victims. Different methods will be employed including prevention, diversion, and enforcement techniques. Each perpetrator will be assessed individually since each will have different requirements

The Probation Service

Building Better Relationships (BBR) - Accredited groupwork programme for domestic abuse perpetrators. This programme is designed for adult males convicted of intimate partner abuse. The programme considers the recent developments in thinking and research in relation to aggression within relationships. It prioritises the safety of women and children. BBR consists of 26 group sessions and 6 individual sessions.

HELP Group work: is a pioneering Healthy Relationships Programme taking a preventative approach to Domestic Abuse. The priority is the development and maintenance of healthy intimate relationships - by outlining key elements of a positive role model and exploring the values, attitudes and skills that reflect this. HELP consists of 15 group sessions and two one-to-one sessions. Mentoring is available outside of programme sessions.

Skills for Relationships Toolkit is a 1:1 toolkit for use with domestic abuse perpetrators who are unable to participate in a groupwork programme. The Skills for Relationship Toolkit (SRT) combines accredited programme content from the building

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): In addition to the above programmes and conditions, Probation Service also utilises multiagency frameworks/processes to manage the risk posed by perpetrators and to identify additional interventions for factors linked to offending behaviour, e.g., MAPPA, or local perpetrator conferences such MATAC (where available). Probation practitioners are aware of local DA pathways and how to refer.

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation

What do we mean by Safe Accommodation?

There are times when victims and their children need increased security measures and support services within their own home or need to move from their own home due to the perpetrator's behaviour. When a victim has safe accommodation needs, we aim to work with them to improve the situation and look at safe options that meets their needs, reduces risk and the advocacy support that wraps around this.

For a victim of domestic abuse and their children it is important to ensure that they have appropriate advice and guidance in relation to safe accommodation options and that appropriate needs led support is provided as they recover and rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, underpinned by statutory guidance introduces new requirements on local authorities and more accountability in the local delivery of domestic abuse support in relevant safe accommodation.

Domestic Abuse Act – Safe Accommodation and Support Services

Under the duties contained within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, local authorities have a function to provide a **provision of support** for all victims of domestic abuse including their children, regardless of their relevant protected characteristics, within 'relevant' safe accommodation (as defined by The Domestic Abuse Support (Relevant Accommodation and Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Sanctuary Schemes) (Amendment) Regulations 2021). Local authorities have a duty to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to the right **accommodation-based support** when they need it. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act outlines what is to be delivered by local authorities, and what they should do to fulfil their statutory responsibilities

Knowsley Council and Local Social Landlord work together closely to ensure that duties owed to victims of domestic abuse under other Acts, such as temporary accommodation provided under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 running alongside this Knowsley will assess whether an individual victim needs accommodation-based support and ensure that their support needs are met. If the household is homeless because of being a victim of domestic abuse, they will have priority need for accommodation secured by the local authority. This means that local housing authorities must provide temporary accommodation until the duty can be discharged through provision of settled accommodation. The temporary accommodation must be suitable in line with the requirements of the Housing Act.

What types of accommodation considered safe?

Refuge provides a critical role in providing safety and support to victims and their children however Knowsley would like to ensure that victims have opportunity to reside in access appropriate safe accommodation and holistic support services. The

Domestic Abuse Act identifies that Safe Accommodation Support Services can be provided in the following single gendered Safe Accommodation models

Approved Models of Safe Accommodation

Refuge accommodation offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

Dispersed Accommodation is Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar 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, and/or where peer support from other residents may not be appropriate, due to complex support needs, or where older teenage sons cannot be accommodated in a women only refuge, for example. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.

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 [footnote 2]. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.

Sanctuary Schemes are properties with local authority or private registered providers of social housing installed Sanctuary Schemes [footnote 3] which provide enhanced physical security measures to a home or the perimeter of the 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

Second Stage Accommodation is temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of relevant accommodation and/or 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 settled accommodation. Where second stage accommodation

is in shared housing it should be single gender or single sex. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a settled new home from refuge. However, second stage accommodation (sometimes known as ‘move-on’) may be helpful in some cases.

Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation – a safe place (single gendered or single sex, secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse) with domestic abuse support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation. For example, short term (e.g., 2-3 weeks) accommodation providing victims with the space and safety to consider and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

What Safe Accommodation Models do we have in Knowsley?

Knowsley Housing Solutions Service: When an individual or family are at risk or currently homeless, they are referred to Knowsley Housing Solutions Service where their individual and family needs are assessed to identify their housing/homeless status, individual support needs and any other contributing factors to the presenting housing need.

Victims of Domestic Abuse can be referred to Housing Solutions to seek advice and support around safe accommodation and support needs due to the domestic abuse that has been perpetrated towards them.

Knowsley has the following safe accommodation models operating across the borough to support victims of domestic abuse:

Refuge: The First Step Ross House Women & Children’s Refuge is our accommodation-based 36 bed service for women and children escaping domestic abuse. The building has a suite design providing flexibility enabling us to accommodate single women and women with up to 9 children plus a suite designed for people with mobility issues. The refuge is staffed 24/7 with support staff and specialist children’s workers who provide a service for children coming into refuge. Access to the refuge is referral by an agency or people can self-refer using the 0151 548 3333 contact number. Vacancies in the refuge are also promoted on the web-based information system ‘Routes to Support’ facilitated by Women’s Aid.

The table below illustrates the referral sources of victims referred to Ross House Women and Children’s Refuge

	2019/20	2020/21
Housing Options & Homelessness	19.2%	23.83%
Refuge/Domestic Abuse services	25.7%	38.81%
Self-Referrals	9.9%	8.82%
Other sources*	45.2%	28.51%

*Other sources include – hospitals, social care, police, drug/alcohol services and health care professionals.

The table below outline the referral source of refuge referrals in Knowsley in 2019/20. and 2020/21.

Type of Exit	Reason for leaving Ross House Refuge	2019/20	2020/21
Planned		42	45
	Family and friends	13	7
	Returned home safely	9	14
	Secured long term accommodation	17	11
	Accommodated in other areas	3	7
	Secured private landlord accommodation	0	1
	Other: B&B/psychiatric hospitalisation	7	3
Unplanned		7	2
	Abandoned	5	
	Asked to leave due to unmanageable risks	2	2

Sanctuary Scheme: Knowsley provides a Sanctuary Scheme, 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 victim’s property or perimeter and providing on-going support services. Most victims receive support from a Sanctuary Scheme and are referred for target hardening (installing security) within the property. The target hardening is either provided by the social landlord or Knowsley Council.

Since the financial Year of 2017/18, a total of 351 properties have been target hardened for victims accessing the service from either Knowsley Safer Communities Service or LivvHousing.

Dispersed Accommodation: In 2019 Knowsley and the wider City Region Authorities were successful in securing funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to further extend and build upon the learning of the Dispersed Accommodation Project pilot from 2017/18. The dispersed accommodation model has proven to be a positive approach in responding to individual support and accommodation need. The project is currently operational until March 2022, prior to this City Region partners will decide on any future commissioning of this project (subject to Needs Assessment).

Knowsley have made the following referrals to the Dispersed accommodation project since 2017.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
25	21	47	45

The Knowsley Needs Assessment

Data Insight

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime. Underreporting to police can lead to official crime figures only providing a partial picture of the actual levels of domestic abuse experienced not only in Knowsley but in the UK as a whole.

One of the strengths of the Knowsley Safer Communities Partnership is that by having access to data from a range of agencies and partners, we can provide a fuller view allowing us to review historical data and project how this may change over time.

For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 5 in 100 adults. To compare this with Knowsley, a total of 746 victims were referred to the Knowsley Safer Communities Team. This equates to a local prevalence rate of 1 in every 100 people (aged 18+)

Domestic Abuse Merseyside Police

Domestic abuse has always been, and continues to be, a key priority for Merseyside Police.

Alongside targeted campaigns raising awareness and increasing confidence for victims to report domestic abuse, changes to legislation has allowed police to utilise new powers and legislation to prosecute offenders and support victims.

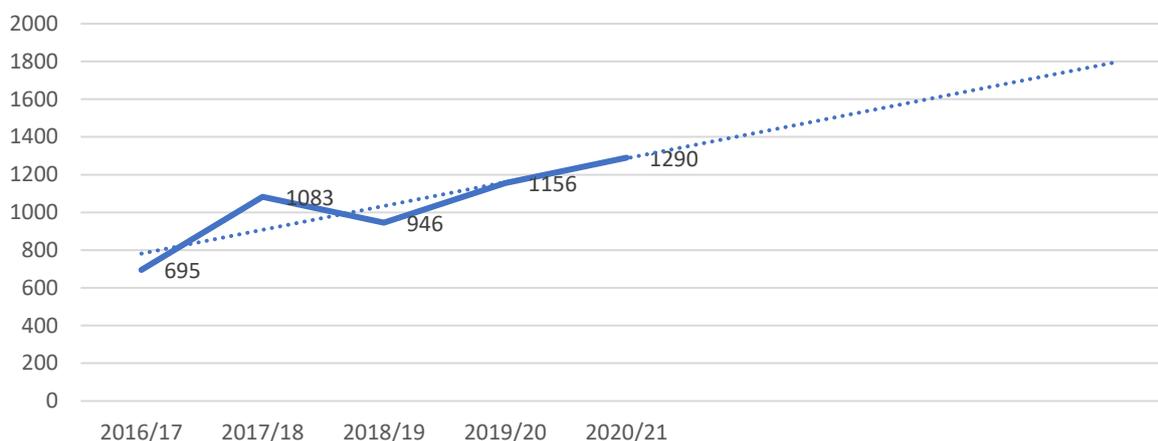
- In Merseyside, 26,037 domestic abuse related crimes were recorded in the year 2019/20. This equates to around 18 crimes for every 1,000 people.
- 78% of domestic abuse incidents in Merseyside were subsequently recorded as crimes in 2020. This compares with only 59% nationally.
- 81% of domestic abuse related prosecutions resulted in a conviction in 2019/20

Domestic Abuse Merseyside Police Data – Knowsley

(Updated in final version)

Community Based Domestic Abuse Advocacy Data

The Knowsley Safer Communities Service work with low and medium risk victims in Knowsley, the service received 1290 referrals in 2020/21 which was an increase of 134 referrals on the previous financial year and an increase of 344 on the year 2018/19. If the current trend increases are to continue, it is projected that by 2024/25, there will be an annual referral level of approximately 1,800 per year, as shown in chart below.



Referral Sources

The table below shows the numbers of referrals into the Safer Communities service from individual referral sources since 2016/17

Referral Source	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Police call for service	596	1046	881	1048	1138
Other	62	0	10	12	5
Adult Social care	3	3	26	46	69
CSC	28	25	18	27	35
Health Services	0	1	4	11	21
Housing	0	4	3	5	3
Safer Communities Service	0	1	3	5	5
Probation	0	0	0	0	10
Early Help Service	3	0	0	0	0
Family First	2	2	0	0	0
Member of Parliament	0	0	1	0	2
Education	0	0	0	2	0
Elected Member	0	1	0	0	1
Youth Offending Service	1	0	0	0	1
Total	695	1083	946	1156	1290

Most referrals are from Merseyside Police accounting for 87% of the final total, with all other referral sources accounting for less than 5% individually. Professional referrals have increased year on year from CSC and Adult Social Care, housing, and health however referrals from other agencies remain low particularly from Early Help Services, it is noted that there are no referrals from the voluntary sector. The referrals

sources support the need for workforce development across the partnership in relation to domestic abuse and the referral pathway.

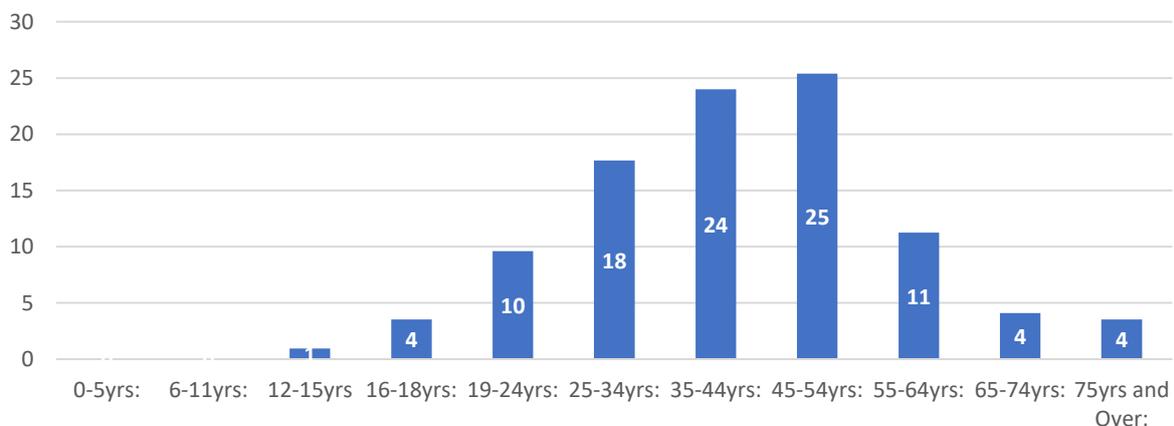
Safer Communities Service referrals - Gender Breakdown

Knowsley, as with the rest of the UK, has seen most domestic abuse victims are female with a slight increase (0.9%) in male victim referrals in the year 2020/21. This is an area that reflects the increase in reported male domestic abuse victims across the country and an area that will be monitored during the timescale of this strategy.

	2019/20	2020/21
Female	98.3%	97.4%
Male	1.7%	2.6%

Safer Communities Service referrals - Age of Victims Breakdown

The chart below shows age categories of victims by percentage. In Knowsley, the likelihood of becoming a victim increases substantially between 35 and 54 with this section of the population accounting for % of all domestic abuse victims.



Domestic Abuse has also historically been a type of crime that does not show a regular pattern for incidents across any financial year and therefore it is difficult to plan for any “peaks and troughs” within financial years, however we are able to make confident predictions on future referral levels by analysing the trends from each financial year since 2015.

The table below shows the levels of community based domestic abuse contacts to advocacy support services.

Referral to Advocacy Support in Knowsley all services

Referral to Advocacy Support in Knowsley all services	2019/20	2020/21
Safer Communities Service Low and Medium Risk	1160	1296
The First Step IDVA Service High Risk MARAC	519	530
The First Step Self Referred Clients	160	188
Total	1839	2014

The Knowsley Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The Knowsley Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency approach to supporting high risk victim survivors of domestic abuse and any children involved.

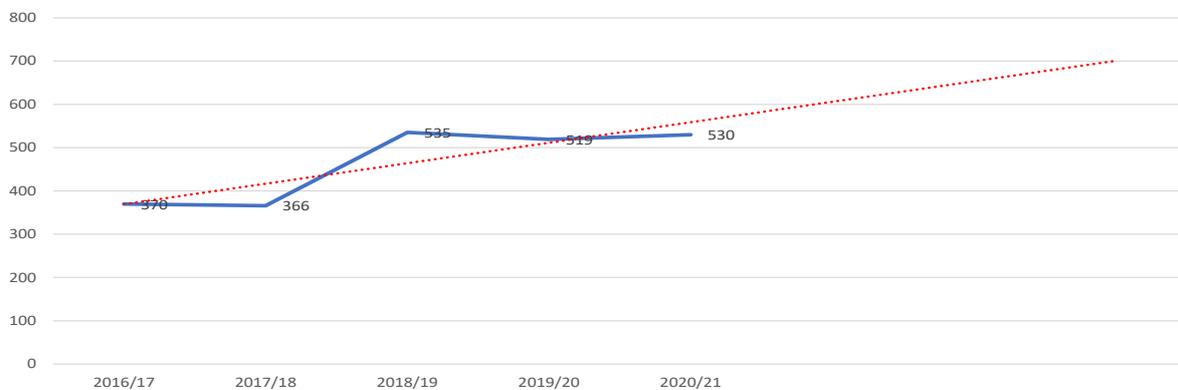
The table below shows the referring agency for MARAC from 2016/17 onwards by referral agency and how these referrals levels may have changed over the past 5 years. The referrals are broken down by percentage within each year and some key points are

- Police referrals have increased from 68% share of referrals to 73% in the most recent year of 2020/21
- Children's social care only accounted for 2% of all MARAC referrals in 2020/21, a 1.3% reduction when compared with 2016/17
- Referrals from Secondary Care have reduced by 50% to a share of 2.5%
- Referrals to MARAC from Adult Social Care have only accounted for 1.8% of all referrals in 2020/21

Referral Source	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Police	68%	65.4%	73.9%	74.7%	73%
IDSVA	7.7%	9.2%	8.2%	3.8%	4.7%
Children's Social Care	3.3%	1.8%	1.0%	2.2%	2.0%
Primary Health Care Services	3.3%	2.7%	2.0%	1.2%	2.9%
Secondary Health Care/Acute	5.5%	5.0%	3.3%	4.5%	2.5%
Education	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Housing	0.3%	1.8%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%
Mental Health	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	1.4%
Probation	1.4%	0.9%	1.2%	0.8%	1.4%
Voluntary Sector	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Substance Recovery Services	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Adult Social Care	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	2.6%	1.8%
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	9.7%	11.5%	7.6%	8.9%	9.2%

The table above supports the need for an investment in domestic abuse awareness and understanding of the referral pathways as the table illustrates a very low percentage of referrals from some services and for some services, they have never referred to MARAC.

The chart shows the levels of MARAC referrals as detailed in table 1.2, and should the levels of referrals remain consistent, the red line shows the projected levels of referrals by 2024/25 which would see levels of referrals reaching around 700 per year.



The breakdown in the table below shows the numbers of victims heard at MARAC with recorded protected characteristics. The numbers of cases for victims within black and ethnic minority groups has been increasing since 2016/17 with a very slight reduction in 2020/21.

LGBTQ+ and cases for victims with disabilities have seen an increase in 2020/21, however this is an area that The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Partnership will focus on to increase confidence in reporting.

Demographics of MARAC referrals supported by IDSVA	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Black and ethnic minority groups	8	8	22	23	21
LGBTQ+	1	0	0	0	6
Disability	1	1	0	0	8
Male	6	6	11	8	15
Female	364	360	524	511	515

Knowsley Safe Accommodation Data

Data from the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (2021) collected data from Knowsley Refuge and Safe Accommodation data from 2018 – 2021.

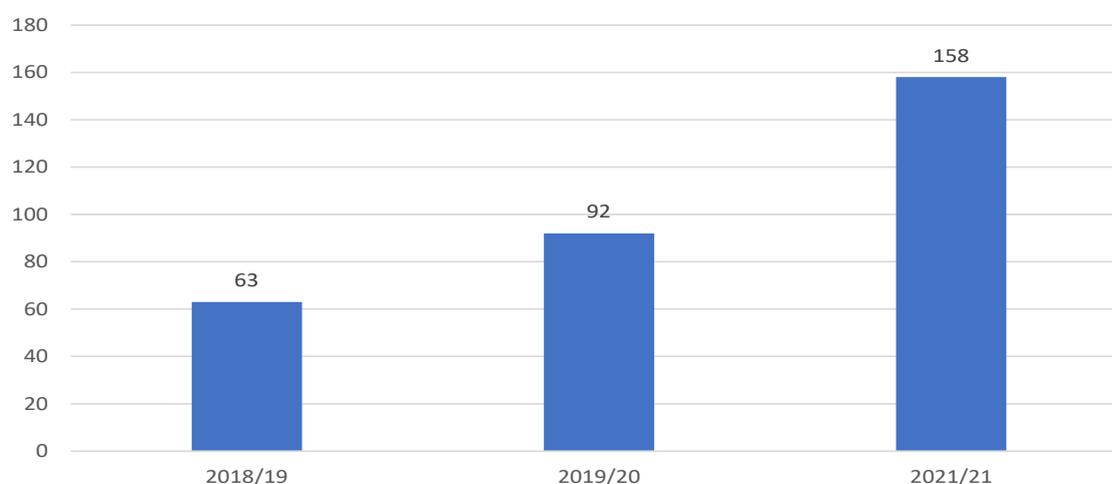
Knowsley Women’s Refuge

From the overall numbers of referrals (n.887) 17% were successful in gaining refuge/safe accommodation (n.155). The main reason for the unsuccessful referrals has been that the refuge has been full at the time of referral, 90% of the victims referred to refuge were from outside of the Knowsley area.

Refuge Accommodation Referrals 2018- 2021

Total referrals received	887
Number of referrals from inside Knowsley area	80
Number of referrals from outside Knowsley area	807
Number of successful first time referrals	155
Number of unsuccessful referrals/ access denied	732
Most common reason for being denied access to service	Refuge Full

The chart below shows the average length of client stay within refuge in Knowsley and as the data shows the average length of stay is increasing year on year with 2020/21 showing that the average client stays for just over 5 months.



This coupled with the numbers being turned away due to full refuge shows the need for a wider safe accommodation provision/model in the Borough.

Children Accessing Refuge: During 2019/2020, 52 children accessed the service with age ranges as follows: 27 children from birth to 5 years, 14 children from 6 to 10 years and 11 children from 11 to 16 years. There were nearly 1000 face to face contacts with the children residing at Ross House, this included group work, one to one sessions, and other activities. The sessions ran weekdays and included working with all age groups accessing the service with their families.

During 2020/2021, 65 children accessed the service with age ranges as follows: 35 children from birth to 5 years, 21 children from 6 to 10 years and 9 children from 11 to 16 years. There were nearly 900 face to face contacts with the children residing at Ross House. This figure will be slightly reduced due to the service reacting to the COVID restrictions put in place to protect the families.

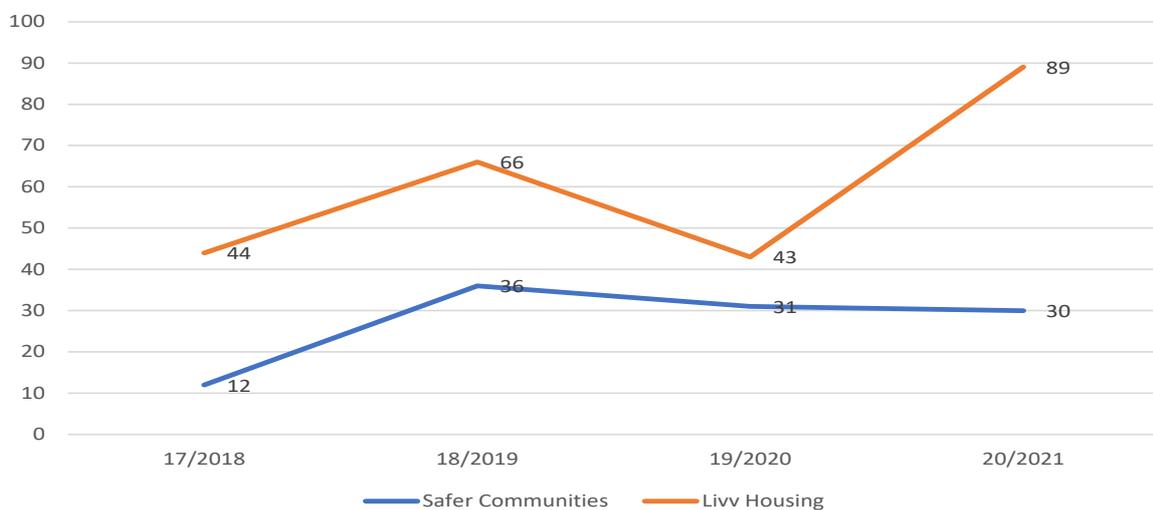
Sanctuary Schemes and Target Hardening: Sanctuary Schemes advocacy support and target hardening is carried out to allow a victim of domestic abuse to remain in their own home. It's an important measure to try and maintain their safety and security.

It can reduce the need of those affected by domestic abuse to find alternate accommodation. It can also discourage abusers from returning.

Examples include

- Target hardening can take many forms, but common measures may include:
- fitting of additional locks and chains on doors
- installation of CCTV and security lighting
- fitting of tremor alarms to the windows
- implementation of fireproof letterboxes and safe rooms

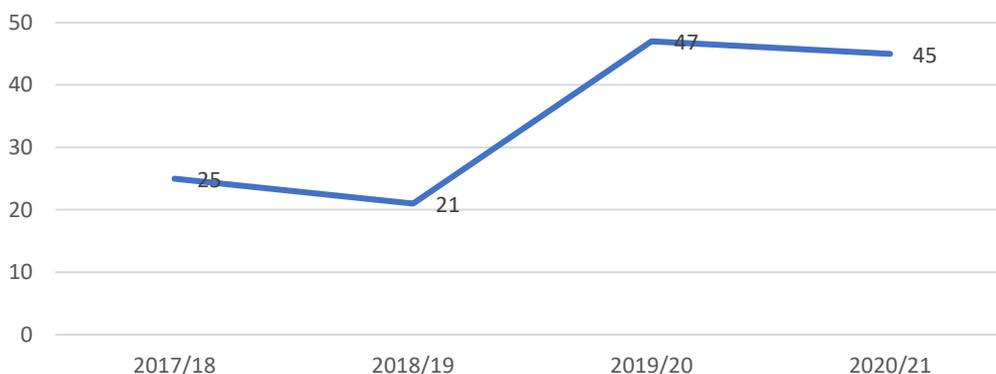
Since the financial Year of 2017/18, a total of 351 properties have been target hardened for victims accessing the service from either Knowsley Safer Communities or Livv Housing. The numbers for target hardening are shown in chart below



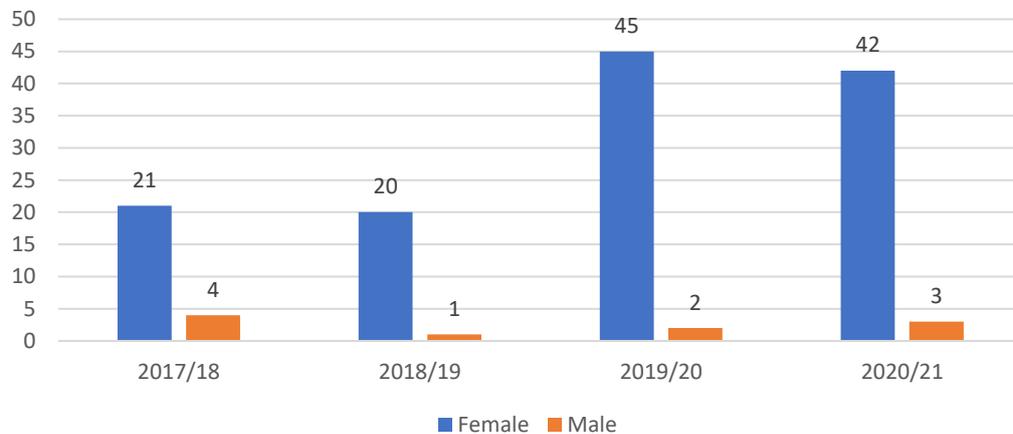
Dispersed Accommodation

Data from 2017/18 to 2020/21, revealed a total of 138 victims accessed dispersed accommodation services in Knowsley.

The requests for dispersed accommodation have increased greatly since 2018/19 onwards with figures over 45 for both the subsequent years.



Most victims accessing services have been female with only 10 victims since 2017/18 being male victims of domestic abuse accessing the dispersed accommodation offer and 128 females. This is an area that The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Board will be monitoring to determine how we ensure that male victims can access appropriate safe accommodation and support.



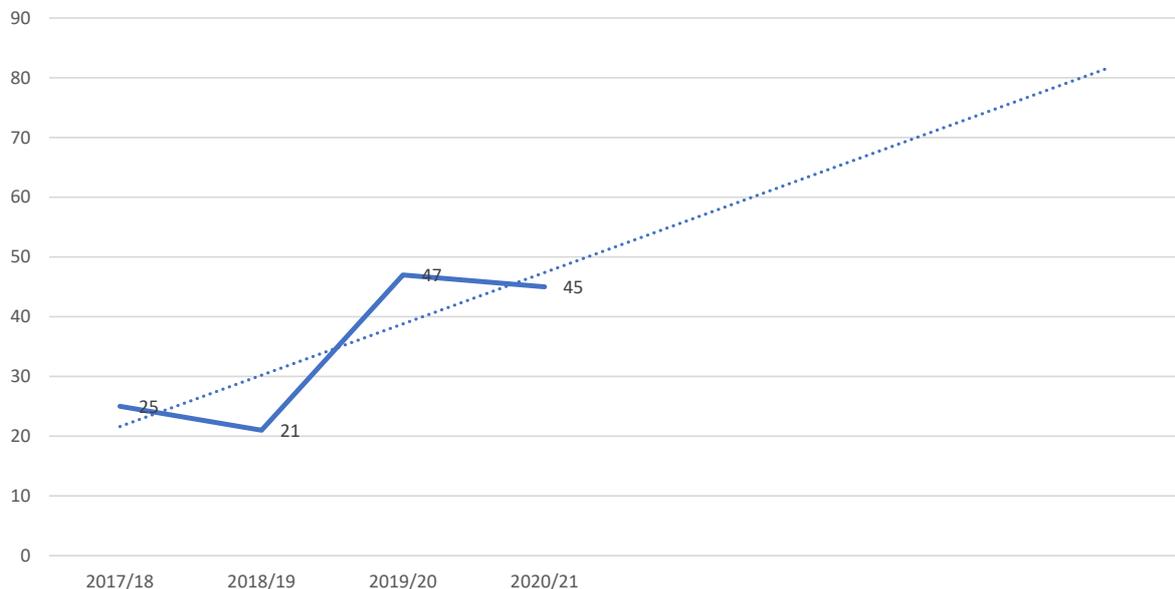
The numbers of children aged 0-17 in dispersed accommodation services have increased by almost 50 when comparing 2017/18 with the most recent data of 2020/21, which shows that the greatest need for accommodation has been from victims with young families.

	Children (0-17)	Young Victims (18-25)	Victims (26-64)	Older Victims (65+)	Pregnant
2017/18	11	4		2	0
2018/19	17	0		1	0
2019/20	25	5		1	0
2020/21	60	9		1	1

From the 138 victims accessing the service only 5 identified as disabled, 5 identified as LGBTQ+ and 7 victims were from the Black and ethnic minority groups.

	Disabled	LGBTQ+	BAME
2017/18	1	0	1
2018/19	1	0	1
2019/20	2	5	4
2020/21	1	0	1

Should the current trend increase continue it is projected that the need for dispersed accommodation services will increase to around 80 victims per year in 2024/25.



The Knowsley Needs Assessment Partner Insight

What have our partners told us about domestic abuse in Knowsley?

To support the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy, a series of workshops with partners took place over the summer months to gather their views and insight and help to shape the strategy and its priorities.

Through group sessions, several key lines of enquiry emerged which has provided some of the basis for the development of the strategy and the areas of focus. Some of the key themes are outlined below:

Identification and screening: The need for more robust and consistent mechanisms to identify domestic abuse in the borough emerged as a particularly strong theme. Participants were keen to stress that there is excellent practice in Knowsley and referred the increasing use of primary care staff to identify and screen for domestic abuse, however, it is acknowledged that identification and screening needs to be embedded more consistently across partners so that the council can plan and deliver services accordingly. Similarly, there were concerns that the patterns and nuances of domestic abuse aren't always understood properly, and therefore identification and management of risk can be patchy.

Interventions for children and young people: Participants from across partner organisations highlighted some of the gaps around support for children and young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. Concerns focused on the fact the predominant service offered for children and young people was not sufficient in

responding to the trauma that young people can often face in the aftermath, and neither was the service appropriate for every child, particularly younger children. Participants relayed that they hoped that services could be improved, paying particular attention to the age of a child, and developing interventions which are age appropriate. Similarly, many participants recognised the often-inter-generational nature of domestic abuse and felt strongly that there needs to be a more concerted focus on delivering healthy relationship and educational programmes to children from a much earlier age.

Partnership working: A theme which emerged throughout conversations was the need to improve partnership working and information sharing across organisations to ensure victim-survivors can move seamlessly through services and ‘only tell their story once’. Although improving, participants relayed concerns that the police, have tended to work in isolation from partners – particularly, in respect to delivering Clare’s Law. In addition, it was felt that there is a lack of knowledge or understanding from other partners around services the council offers to victim-survivors who can leave people unaware of what support they – and their children – may be entitled to receive.

Getting the basics right: There was a strong sense among participants that the council focus should be on ‘getting the basics right’ both in terms of service provision and training and workforce development. Training and workforce development to enable a better, more consistent understanding of domestic abuse and patterns of behaviour across the partnership was seen as a critical facet of improvement and ensuring domestic abuse cases are properly identified and provided with effective support.

Tenancy and housing: Participants outlined their concerns about the risk of a victim returning to a perpetrator if proper housing and tenancy support is not put in place at the earliest opportunity. Across the workshops, the need for practical assistance – such as providing funding to buy furniture and bedding – along with tenancy support, or sanctuary support was viewed as a crucial part of the response, particularly for high-risk cases who might otherwise return to a perpetrator. Alongside this, practitioners talked about how domestic abuse victims often feel ‘de-skilled’ due to the level of control and isolation they have experienced. As such, workshops identified the need to bolster skills development as a way of boosting confidence so that victims feel equipped to cope alone without the perpetrator

The Knowsley Needs Assessment User Voice Insight

Insight from Domestic Abuse Victims

Consultation is in progress – final version will have overview.

Insight from Children and Young People

To support the development of the Knowsley 2030 strategy, the council developed a comprehensive programme of engagement with children and young people in Knowsley. The insight garnered through this consultation period has helped the council to understand some of the key issues facing young people in the borough, their

personal ambitions, and aspirations and what they feel is important in their community. This insight was then supplemented with several subsequent engagement sessions and surveys which took place prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic to help the council and our partners develop the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy and the new Children and Families Plan. Although the insight did not focus on domestic abuse specifically, some of the relevant themes which emerged from this insight gathering exercise include:

Home and family: Care-experienced children and young people were consulted as part of the Children Looked After strategy. There was a strong belief that having a happy and stable home, whether with birth parents or foster carers, was a very important factor in determining whether a child would grow up to be happy and successful. Young people talked about the difference between having what they want, for instance new trainers and phones, and having what they need and there was a clear recognition that love, and emotional support is key to a happy, successful childhood. This insight dovetails with our Domestic Abuse Strategy as domestic abuse are a key driver of children's social care interventions in Knowsley.

Mental and physical wellbeing: Access to support and signposting to help and advice was raised as important in discussions. Green spaces were discussed as ways to improve wellbeing. Young people discussed the importance of tackling the stigma associated with discussions of mental health and the importance of prevention of crisis points, particularly considering over-stretched mental health services for young people. Opportunities to develop confidence and self-esteem were also discussed by young people; this aligns with some of the insight from practitioners which highlighted the importance of rebuilding confidence and self-esteem for victim-survivors and their children. Young people also highlighted the importance of family – whatever form that might take – and friends in promoting good mental health, with loneliness identified as one of the main ways mental health can be detrimentally affected.

Our Vision for Domestic Abuse in Knowsley

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board have a vision that:

Knowsley is a place that has a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse, we want to build communities where domestic abuse is socially unacceptable. A place where victims, children, families, and communities know where to access support, feel safe and confident to access support to reach their potential and have safer, healthier, happier relationships.

To achieve the vision for Domestic Abuse in Knowsley the following 8 priorities have been identified. The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board have agreed these priorities based upon information gained via the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment, professional insight sessions and user voice in 2021.

Priority 1: Equipping the workforce to understand and respond to domestic abuse and coercive control

What did we find out?

Recent Domestic Homicide Reviews, The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment and the strategy insight sessions have identified that there is a strong sense amongst participants that the partnership focus should be on 'getting the basics right' both in terms of service provision, training, and workforce development. A better, more consistent understanding of domestic abuse and patterns of behaviour across the partnership was seen as a critical facet of improvement and ensuring domestic abuse cases and coercive control are properly identified and provided with effective support.

Knowsley has a wealth of grass root voluntary, community and faith sector organisations and groups. There is a need to develop the awareness understanding of domestic abuse and support services across the sector so that the safe opportunity for those impacted by domestic abuse to disclose are more readily available within our communities.

The referrals to domestic abuse advocacy service illustrate that there are many services, organisations and sectors not utilising the domestic abuse referral pathway, as such opportunity for some victims to access specialist support may be being missed.

The Knowsley Partnership Boards support this view that all professionals should be equipped to identify, recognise, and respond to domestic abuse and coercive control. It is important that professionals are aware of the range of support available, from early intervention to crisis stage. Best practice responses involve an integrated response which combines domestic abuse expertise/specialist services, child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, particularly in relation to risk assessment and safety planning.

It is essential that agencies can identify and respond to all forms of abuse and all victims. This includes intimate partner abuse between adults – including where children are present and experience the abuse; inter-familial domestic abuse; and children and young people experiencing or perpetrating abuse, either in their own relationships or towards a family member.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board has identified that there is a need to establish an effective multi-agency response to domestic abuse, as such there is a requirement for all frontline agencies consider the impact of domestic abuse and that their workforce is trained to understand dynamics and the signs of domestic abuse and

have a clear understanding of the pathways to appropriate and specialist support for victims, children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

How will we achieve this?

- Establishment of a multi-agency Workforce Development Group to identify the training needs relating to domestic abuse coercive control and other interrelated areas
- We will work with our voluntary, community and faith groups to implement a sector led domestic abuse awareness development plan
- Improve the workforce awareness of the pathways to domestic abuse support
- Training to support the development of trauma informed responses and interventions
- Implementation of targeted specialist training as identified by the workforce development group including specialist training to understand how we can improve our response to communities and victims with protective characteristics
- An annual audit of training needs will take place across the partnership to review impact, attendance and need for ongoing domestic abuse training
- Continued review of the number and quality of referrals to domestic abuse specialist services
- We will consult with service users to ascertain their experience and feedback.

Priority 2: The victim voice and community engagement processes are central to the development of Domestic Abuse strategies and responses

What did we find out?

Through the development of the Needs Assessment and Strategy process it was established that there are positive areas of user voice and community engagement in ensuring the voice of both victim and children are central to strategic and operational responses to domestic abuse. However, the co-ordination and shared learning across the partnerships is an area where we seek to improve.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We need to establish effective processes across the partnership to ascertain the victim voice so that services can be responsive to need and reflective of the lived experience of victims.

How will we achieve this?

- By placing the voice of the victim at the centre of all our interventions - when we receive feedback, we will listen and consider how we can respond
- Implement an effective process to ensure that the voice of the victim is represented at The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and Operational level
- Establish a user voice and participation worker to liaise across the partnership and co-ordinate opportunity to seek user feedback

- Work with our children’s participation and user voice group to ensure the voices of children are heard and acted upon
- Engage with victim-survivors about their experience of accessing local services, this will inform improvements across agencies

Priority 3: interventions respond to the lived experience of victims of domestic abuse, are victim led and trauma informed and include specialist domestic abuse advocacy support.

What have we found out?

Knowsley has a positive partnership response and commitment to supporting those impacted upon by domestic abuse. We continue to recognise that all our partners can contribute to the support and that to respond effectively we must all provide victim led services with a mutual understanding of domestic abuse.

We know that for some victims there are other barriers impacting on them or preventing them accessing support, this could be a disability, financial issues, substance recovery needs, a hidden/unknown learning need, cultural barriers, language barrier and LGBT+ communities. With the support of our “By and for” partners, the Knowsley offer needs to be reviewed so that we ensure that we are providing appropriate support services to all victims of domestic abuse.

Most referrals to both community and safe accommodation support services are women however there is also a need for the partnership to review the awareness, accessibility and responses to men who are victims of domestic abuse. Our awareness raising of domestic abuse support pathways needs to ensure that male victims feel confident in accessing support

We also know that, outside of children’s safeguarding process’s victims should have a choice in who they access support from, subject to risk. Victims of domestic abuse, unfortunately live with abuse daily and the dis-empowering control from perpetrators.

Our responses will seek to work with victims to reduce the risk, repair the impact of the harm, highlight their strengths, and support them to regain their control.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We want to make sure we have continued capacity to respond to the issue of domestic abuse within our community-based provision, with appropriate level of specialist Domestic Abuse Advocates to respond to the demand for services.

We will develop our responses ensuring they are victim/needs led and include trauma informed approaches which are free from prescribed timescales.

Our aim is to ensure that every known victim to specialist domestic abuse services, regardless of risk level, is offered appropriate support at the right time for them and considers their lived experience and intersectionality’s.

We are looking to further extend our victim offer to achieve a more holistic response, when possible, we will develop co-location models and joint delivery/support between a wider variety of specialist services providing support for complex needs, over and above the complexities that domestic abuse brings.

We want to prevent victim's having to repeat their experiences to agencies.

How will we achieve this?

- The Domestic Abuse Board will continuously review the capacity to respond to the demand for specialist domestic abuse advocacy support
- Embed a coordinated and systematic joined up approach to preventing and dealing with the consequences of domestic abuse/incidents across the borough
- Domestic abuse/incident responses are aligned, integrated, and embedded across partner strategies and service plans.
- User voice will be central to all assessments and interventions, we will ask victims what support they want, what they need, and we will listen to what they say
- Ensure victims are aware that they have a choice to access provision from either council or independent specialist domestic abuse services
- The Operation Enhance model will continue to be reviewed (with victims) to identify the impact of this early intervention approach
- Interventions will reflect need rather than timescales; the partnership will work together across services to ensure support services are readily available
- An Intervention group will be established to review operational practice, identify gaps, areas for development and good and emerging practice within domestic abuse
- Services for victims will be holistic and responsive providing full wrap around support across multiple complex needs (housing, mental health, substance recovery, employment, health, and mental health)
- The recommendation of domestic homicide reviews (local, regional, and national) will be acted upon, and services and responses reviewed
- Our services will reflect the needs of victims with protective characteristic and those without recourse to public funds
- Identify those victims who are repeat to services to understand and respond to the complex issues they are facing and to work to remove their barriers to engagement.
- Align service responses to domestic abuse so that victims and their children have the confidence that services are working **with them** to identify their strengths and preventing institutional re-victimisation.
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators as parents and giving victims full credit for their protective efforts.

Priority 4: Implementation of early intervention and prevention responses with children as victims as domestic abuse

Given the complex nature of domestic abuse, a multi-agency response is critical to identify victims and their families at an early stage and before reaching crisis point. Multi-agency working enables professionals to get a better understanding of the needs of the victims, including children and young people, and the risk of the perpetrator and enable professionals to work together to respond to risks without waiting for the abuse to escalate

What did we find out?

Participants from across partner organisations highlighted some of the gaps around support for children and young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. Concerns focused on the fact the predominant service offered for children and young people was not sufficient in responding to the trauma that young people can often face in the aftermath, and neither was the service appropriate for every child, particularly younger children. Participants relayed that they hoped that services could be improved, paying particular attention to the age of a child, and developing interventions which are age appropriate. Similarly, many participants recognised the often-inter-generational nature of domestic abuse and felt strongly that there needs to be a more concerted focus on delivering healthy relationship and educational programmes to children from a much earlier age.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We need to listen to children and identify and respond to the and early signs that domestic abuse is impacting on them, and we need to embed, and early intervention focus on preventing the impact of domestic abuse on children. While the challenges faced by domestic abuse victims and their children can be complex, working with partners, equipping our workforces with skills and opportunities to help families at the right time, and ensuring that our communities have a voice and are supported to help each other. There is a need to review the offer to children so that learning is appropriately identified to ensure that the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved.

How will we achieve this?

- Professionals are equipped to identify the signs of domestic abuse and feel confident to respond to the needs of children impacted
- The voice of the child, as a victim is obtained, listened to, and acted upon and is central to all assessments and intervention plans - there is a need to ensure children have a safe place and opportunity to disclose their concerns or experiences relating to domestic abuse and to feedback to professionals the impact of interventions put in place.
- Children at risk, and who are exposed to domestic abuse are effectively supported through age relevant interventions including one; one support and group work interventions

- Recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences on mental health in children and young people, increased therapeutic and trauma informed targeted support to those children impacted upon by domestic abuse
- Delivery of age-appropriate healthy relationships programmes to children within educational based provision to work to prevent and reduce the risk of future incidents of domestic abuse
- The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Advocate within the MASH to support safeguarding process at contact and referral stage
- There has been an increase in the prevalence of younger people as direct victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, there is a need to invest and develop age appropriate and targeted intervention to support those aged 16-21 years
- Align service responses to domestic abuse so that victims and their children have the confidence that services are working with them to identify their strengths and preventing institutional re-victimisation,
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators as parents and giving victims full credit for their protective efforts.

Priority 5: Respond to the safe accommodation and support needs of those victims and children impacted upon by Domestic Abuse

What did we find out about our Safe Accommodation Models?

The greatest area of safe accommodation support is provided by community-based provision via advocates or IDVA in Knowsley as many victims wish to either remain in their own accommodation or move within borough or within the wider Merseyside area.

Demand for a house move to safer accommodation for domestic abuse victims in Knowsley outstrips current supply, victim-survivors who are not at immediate risk of harm are assessed and often must wait a significant amount of time for a suitable accommodation due to a lack of available and suitable local safe accommodation.

When assessed for housing needs, the geographical location of the perpetrator is a key area for consideration and can result in a victim being offered a property away from their family and support networks. Though a risk associated by the perpetrator is a factor so is the need to consider the increased risk of moving a victim away from their established support networks.

The perception of a “refuge” can prevent women and men from seeking support or safe accommodation.

There are limited numbers of refuge accommodation spaces which are accessible for victims with a physical disability and / or older victim-survivors, this is not an issue unique to Knowsley. There is a need to review the safe accommodation offer to ensure that we can respond to victims with physical disabilities.

There is a lack of awareness amongst professionals about the Sanctuary Scheme and in particular target hardening as such there is an opportunity for it to benefit more people

There is no dedicated domestic abuse accommodation or support provision for LGBTQ+ victim-survivors and / or male victim-survivors as such there is a need to look out of borough for this provision or offer an alternative safe accommodation option.

Safe Accommodation Support Services

Domestic abuse safe accommodation support services include the expert help provided to victims by specialist staff in domestic abuse safe accommodation support services. In Knowsley, some support is directly provided by staff on site (e.g., within refuges), whereas other support will be provided to victims through a support worker visiting them, including in their own homes in the case of a sanctuary scheme. However, in all cases, support is provided to victims who reside in relevant safe accommodation.

What did we find out about Knowsley's Safe Accommodation Support Needs?

Professionals who engaged in the consultation process outlined their concerns about the risk of a victim returning to a perpetrator if proper housing and tenancy support is not put in place at the earliest opportunity. Across the workshops, the need for practical assistance – such as providing funding to buy furniture and bedding – along with tenancy support, or sanctuary support was viewed as a crucial part of the response. Alongside this, practitioners talked about how domestic abuse victims often feel 'de-skilled' due to the level of control and isolation they have experienced. As such, workshops identified the need provide opportunity for personal and social development as a way of boosting confidence so that victims feel equipped to cope alone without the perpetrator

Domestic abuse is a key area of need for those referred to Knowsley's Housing Solutions Service. On discussion with partners internal and external it has been identified that a dedicated Domestic Abuse Advocate located within the Housing Solutions service would enhance the offer to those impacted upon by domestic abuse. This would enable a specialist response to victim/survivors and ensure safe practice responses and increased capacity to respond.

Resettlement and move on from safe accommodation can be a point in time when risk increases and when stress and anxiety develop. Without an appropriate level of support victim/survivors may be targeted and vulnerable from their perpetrators. Knowsley does not currently have this dedicated role, and this would increase the offer and response to those impacted upon by domestic abuse

There is a high prevalence of mental health needs of victim/survivors that access the domestic abuse safe accommodation and support services which is not currently being met due to demand outweighing supply.

Sanctuary support Services and The Knowsley Refuge Service have reported an increase in the complexity of the needs of women and children entering the refuge, this has been pre and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The complexities include increased support for

mental health, alcohol and substance use, English as a second language and abuse with high-risk cases.

Victim/survivors are more complex than before and some experience alcohol or substance misuse and dual diagnosis of mental health. The take up of alcohol and substance misuse services can often be a barrier to recovery as the issue of consent and an understanding of what to expect often places additional stress and anxiety of a victim. A dedicated specialist domestic abuse alcohol and substance recovery worker working across the domestic abuse pathway would work to address and breakdown the barrier.

The take up of Therapeutic/Counselling Support Services by victims of domestic abuse is well utilised and is an area of support for many victim/survivors require as an aid to recovery. However longer term holistic, wellbeing and trauma led practice and therapy approaches is a gap in provision at the moment and experiences pre and post the start of the pandemic has demonstrated an increased number of clients with complex needs.

There is no dedicated domestic abuse safe accommodation or support provision for LGBT+ victim/survivors or male victim/survivors in Knowsley

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

Knowsley has a Women's Refuge and though it does at time have to turn victims away based on the size of the borough, one refuge is sufficient. The priority for the borough is to look to increase our safe accommodation offer in terms of types of safe accommodation available to victims of domestic abuse. The current Dispersed accommodation project will end in March 2022 and there is a need for the borough to commission a dispersed model.

There is also a need to ensure that the Sanctuary Scheme is supported via the statutory 31 Grant so that more victims can continue to be supported to remain in their own home or resettle elsewhere in the borough.

The complex needs of victims referred for safe accommodation support has increased and there is a need to identify, assess at an early point and respond to such needs and other intersectionality.

How will we achieve this?

- Increased awareness raising to ensure that domestic abuse victims know how to access safe accommodation and support options
- Workforce development to improve professional understanding of domestic abuse, safe accommodation, and avenues of support available
- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will work to continuously review the safe accommodation service provision needs of those domestic abuse victims with protective characteristics
- The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Advocate within the MASH to support safeguarding and ensure specialist domestic abuse support at point of contact
- Establishment of domestic abuse advocacy support within housing services to ensure victims and their children's safe accommodation and support needs are

appropriately assessed –understanding that immediate risk increases when a victim plans to leave or has left a domestic abuse situation.

- Increased sanctuary and resettlement support will be established to enable victims to remain or return home safely and/or move into alternative permanent accommodation.
- The Knowsley Women’s Refuge Provision is to be re-tendered in 2022 until ensuring longer term sustainability for this provision
- Establish domestic abuse complex needs support services across safe accommodations services including support for: Substance Recovery, Mental Health, Trauma led practice
- Victims (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. This includes holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour
- Work with social landlords to ensure that domestic abuse continues to be classed as a breach of tenancy conditions so that perpetrators can be held accountable and potentially evicted as part of a multi-agency response.
- Consider the communication process across the partners so that the early identification of properties where property damage and repairs indicate that abuse is present, and that specialist domestic abuse advocacy support is offered

Priority 6: To hold those that cause the harm and perpetrate Domestic Abuse to account and ensure support and challenge through appropriate behaviour change programmes.

What do we know?

If we want to address the issues of domestic abuse we must challenge the behaviour, attitudes, and underlying issues that impact on people identified as controlling, abusive, and violent. The right interventions at the right time can stop abuse from occurring, recurring, or escalating. By confronting perpetrators with both the consequences of the behaviour and starting to address the underlying issues that trigger that abuse we can work to prevent the impact on victim and children.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We want to deliver a victim informed approach to the perpetrator offer and make sure that perpetrators are appropriately challenged and supported to change their behaviour (at the earliest opportunity) providing a holistic response to the needs of those perpetrators who cause the harm.

We are working with our partners to extend the support in areas of group work provision, substance misuse, education, employment, and mental health support services. Where perpetrators refuse to change their behaviour then partners will work together utilising all legal tools and powers to hold perpetrators to account.

How will we achieve this?

- Ensure that perpetrator responses and interventions are victim centred – with the key aim to reduce the risk to victim and children (when present)

- Align service responses to domestic abuse so that victims and their children have the confidence that services are working with them to identify their strengths and preventing institutional re-victimisation
- We will implement models that embed the importance of higher expectations of perpetrators as parents and giving victims full credit for their protective efforts.
- Continue to develop the case management model to offer support and challenge to those perpetrators who cause the harm
- Development of appropriate and domestic abuse perpetrator programmes to reduce the likelihood of re-offending
- Review the learning from The Choices Pathway to determine the impact of the provisions of holistic wrap around interventions
- Ensure partners continue to share appropriate information regarding risk of perpetrators – to work to keep victims and children safe
- Statutory and non-statutory perpetrator responses to work together to align response, share good practice and resources and when needed ensure transition from statutory-non-statutory intervention (vice – versa) is co-ordinated
- Partnership effective consideration and uses of all available legal tools and powers to keep victims of domestic abuse safe and prevent further harm.

Priority 7: Work with the partnership to develop and implement Employee Domestic Abuse Workplace policy and support across the borough

Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies and Support

Domestic abuse occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, religious believe, sexuality, disability, wealth, and geography. It has extreme consequences for victims across a whole range of outcomes, including physical and mental health, alcohol abuse, homelessness and in extreme cases, suicide and/or murder. Domestic abuse is likely to impact on the workplace.

One in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. This means it will be likely that all workplaces will have staff who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, as well as those who are perpetrators. On average a woman will experience 35 episodes of domestic abuse before seeking help (Jaffe et al, 1986). Male victims of domestic abuse, particularly if abused by a female, may be less likely to talk about their situation.

In 2018, when the Knowsley Council Sustainable Borough Scrutiny Committee reviewed the delivery of domestic abuse services in Borough. The Scrutiny Committee reported back that they were impressed by the committed and proactive approach being adopted by partners across Knowsley to tackle the issue. The Committee made recommendation for the development of Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions with employers, business and community networks across the borough and the development of policies for those employees impacted upon by domestic abuse.

In 2019 The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership requested that all partners support the development of Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies to support those impacted upon by domestic abuse. To take this forward, in 2020 the partnership accessed the specialist training from the Merseyside Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions Scheme delivered by The Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board recognises the key role that employers play in ensuring that any employee affected by domestic abuse can access help to end the abuse, receive support and to be enabled to continue in their employment. It is essential that working environments reflect the ambition of the Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy and encourages practice that delivers against this and the other priorities.

How will we achieve this?

- The Council will launch the Domestic Violence and Abuse Workplace Policy in 2022 and undertake awareness raising across the workforce so that the policy is understood, and those employees impacted by domestic abuse are aware of the support available
- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will review the current position of each partner in relation to the development and implementation of a policy
- Links will be established with the Knowsley Chamber to work with Knowsley businesses to review the current needs of business across the borough to understand and respond to domestic abuse
- Knowsley is seeing a period of growth, regeneration and economic development seeing new businesses and homes coming to the borough – new business's will be encouraged to access the support to implement domestic abuse workplace policies and processes
- Employers will be encouraged to access further Merseyside Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions Scheme training delivered by The Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner

Priority 8: To Increase the social and community awareness of domestic abuse and pathways to support within Knowsley

What do we know?

When living with domestic abuse a person or family can feel trapped, isolated, controlled, or feel like they are walking on eggshells all the time and that there is nowhere to turn for support. For some they live in silence afraid to speak out, afraid to access support through fear of what people may think of them or what services may do to them.

The learning from domestic homicide reviews tells us that we need to do more to raise the awareness of domestic abuse across our communities, in Knowsley we want to change the culture and create a community when domestic abuse is socially unacceptable and that it is the perpetrators behaviours that need to change.

What does this mean/what needs to happen?

We want people impacted upon by domestic abuse to know that support is available and that they can access support at a time when they are ready, and we want those in immediate danger to know they can contact the police and other support services and we will respond.

To do this we need to increase our community's awareness of what coercive control and domestic abuse is, what are the signs are and how to access the pathways to support.

During the COVID 19 pandemic Knowsley domestic abuse services reported an increase in third party reports to police raising their concerns for people impacted upon by domestic abuse as such we need to build upon this and ensure that we find the right way to talk with our communities about domestic abuse.

How will we achieve this?

- We need to engage with victim's, children, and their families to determine how can we best communicate our message in a safe way
- Development of multi-agency co-ordinated communication strategy to raise the community awareness of domestic abuse the impact and how to report or seek support.
- Take forward the principles with Knowsley Better Together and work to create a culture change – making domestic abuse socially unacceptable
- We need to be seen in communities highlighting the pathways to support
- We will work with “by and for” groups to identify how we can improve the pathways to support for those with victims who have protective characteristics
- Create safe communities where people feel that they can contact services including police to raise their concerns without repercussions
- Delivery of training and guidance to Elected Members so they can respond to residents impacted upon by domestic abuse, re-assuring them that they will contact support services on their behalf.
- Work with our voluntary, community and faith sector partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse
- Work with our Liverpool City Region Partners and National Partners to implement regional and national domestic abuse awareness campaigns
- Embed the early intervention model and develop age-appropriate healthy relationships work across education settings
- Work with our Knowsley business partners to encourage them to support our communication strategy and support the wider domestic abuse strategy

Outcome Framework

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DARB) will take responsibility to take forward The Knowsley Domestic Abuse Vision and 8 Priorities identified within this Strategy on behalf of the Knowsley Community Safer Partnership. The Board will have the oversight of the coordination, offer and discharge of services and support to those who have experience domestic abuse (victims and children) and the challenge/prosecution and rehabilitation of those perpetrators/offenders who cause the abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will implement this three-year Domestic Abuse Strategy and will hold partners to account to deliver the strategy through the development of a co-ordinated multi-agency action plan and performance framework to achieve the following Long-, Medium- and Short-Term Outcomes

Domestic Abuse Outcome Framework

Long Term Outcomes

Domestic Abuse incidents are reported and those impacted are accessing appropriate and timely support	The impact of domestic abuse is reduced
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Medium Term Outcomes

Our communities are better informed about domestic abuse and the social Tolerance of Domestic Abuse is Reduced	The stigma of domestic abuse has reduced	Consistent Partnership Approach across The Knowsley Community to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic abuse	Individual needs of all victims and their children impacted upon by domestic abuse are met at the earliest opportunity	Those perpetrators who cause the harm are held to account and dealt with effectively	Employers across Knowsley have increased understanding o of the impact of Domestic abuse and respond appropriately
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Short Term Outcomes

Outcome 1 Multi agency partnership working to align domestic abuse responses across the borough	Outcome 2 Greater integration of domestic abuse activities within other strategies and service plans	Outcome 3 Those affected by domestic abuse have more opportunity to shape the development of services, policy, and practice	Outcome 4 Service providers are more skilled to identify and respond to the needs of victims and their families	Outcome 5 Increased public understanding of domestic abuse & knowledge of where to access support
Outcome 6 Children have greater understanding of domestic abuse within the context of healthy relationships	Outcome 7: Victims can access specialist services which meet their individual need.	Outcome 8: Children at risk and who have been exposed to domestic abuse are effectively supported	Outcome 9: Perpetrators are dealt with appropriately and efficiently	Outcome 10: Known perpetrators are less likely to re-offend