

**Strategy:**  
**Serious Violence and Violence Against  
Women and Girls**

Author: Chief Communities Officer  
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## Our Vision

“Our vision is for all residents of Broxtowe, especially children, young people and women, to live free of fear and violence. Working with our partners, we will raise awareness and work to prevent exploitation, serious violence and abuse in homes, public spaces and the community. We will promote zero tolerance of violence and abuse and survivors will be able to access the support services they need”

## Our Aim

This strategy sets out our commitment in response to the governments Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Serious Violence Strategy 2018, and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2021 to reduce Violence and Domestic Abuse including violence against women and girls and to ensure victims and survivors are able to access quality support services.

## Objectives

1. Build on existing strong multi agency partnerships to deliver improved outcomes
2. Work in partnership to create safer streets and public spaces
3. Raise awareness of support available to improve reporting
4. Increase public confidence and feeling safe
5. Reduce the number of incidents through education and early intervention
6. Enable victims and survivors to access high quality support services
7. Promote positive outcomes for children and young people impacted by violence and exploitation.

## Statutory Definition of Serious Violence:

In the 2018 Serious Violence Strategy, the government defines serious violence as **“specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing.**

## Serious Violence

Some serious violence offences have been increasing since 2014 – homicide, knife crime, gun crime – but these typically make up just 1% of crime recorded by the police.

A sizeable proportion of robbery offences (21%) involve the use – or the threat of use – of a knife and knife robberies account for 40% of all offences involving a knife or sharp instrument.

While serious violence offences make up only 1% of total crime, they are of course among the most harmful to society.

Analysis shows that there are many different types of serious violence, and hence that there are likely to be many different drivers however the majority of incidents are linked to Drugs, Profit, Alcohol and Gangs.

There is a large victim and offender overlap therefore children and young people impacted by serious violence should be supported through a trauma informed approach.

Nottinghamshire have a Violence Reduction Unit which is one of 20 nationwide that was established following a commitment made in the Government's Serious Violence Strategy 2018.

### **Serious Violence Duty**

Following public consultation in July 2019, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty (“the Duty”) on a range of specified authorities. This will ensure relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.

The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships and by making sure they have a strategy in place to explicitly tackle serious violence.

The Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) will be leading on the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty on behalf of the partnership to drive a unified Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy toward the prevention of serious violence, including domestic abuse.

The Borough Council as a specified authority are responsible for the delivery of a range of vital services for people and businesses in the local area, including housing, alcohol licensing, leisure, community safety, planning and business support so has an essential role to play in partnership arrangements and we are well placed to complement the work of other agencies and contribute to the prevention and reduction of serious violence by:

- Conducting wider preventative work addressing general factors that contribute to risk and vulnerability e.g. poverty, housing, family challenges, environment
- Providing information on availability/pressures on local resources including housing, community support, etc., and

- Supporting early intervention initiatives which could be required in response to issues concerning child criminal exploitation, gang activity, sexual violence, domestic abuse.

### **The Statutory Definition of Domestic Abuse:**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 creates, for the first time, a cross-government statutory definition of domestic violence and abuse to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes.

The Government definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse is:

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

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse

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

For the purposes of the Act A's behaviour may be behaviour towards B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (e.g. B's child).

The Government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

In September 2012, it was announced that the Government definition of domestic violence and abuse would be widened to include those aged 16-17 and wording changed to reflect coercive control.

Coercive behaviour is:

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

Controlling behaviour is:

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

## Domestic Violence Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is one of the most pervasive crimes in our society. The harm resulting from domestic violence and abuse can have a lasting impact on families and victims and preventative action to reduce the number of incidents remains a priority for both local agencies and Government departments.

In the 2022/2023 the Crime Survey (England and Wales) estimated that 2.1m over 16's (1.4m women and 751,000 men) experienced domestic abuse. There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced than in the previous year with the police recording 889,918 domestic abuse-related crimes (excluding Devon and Cornwall) and 51,288 domestic abuse-related prosecutions, compared with 53,207 in the previous year.

DVA also significantly affects those children and young people who witness such incidents of violence and control. Their experience of DVA can lead to intergenerational cycles of vulnerability and perpetration as there is victim and offender overlap therefore children and young people impacted by serious violence should be supported through a trauma informed approach.

The impact of domestic violence and abuse can be devastating. In the worst instances, it results in serious injury or even death. There are long term implications for the health and wellbeing of victims, including poor physical and mental health conditions, isolation and often substance misuse.

Communicating online is a normal way of life for many young people and the UK's internet access is amongst the highest in Europe with teenagers' usage higher than that of adults. It is becoming more evident that there are numerous ways that technology can be used to abuse young people.

These include:

- Gifts of expensive smart phones which can be used in exchange for gang membership, sexual favours and abuse
- Cyber bullying
- Online grooming
- Digital stalking
- Naming of rape victims online
- Social location services whereby perpetrators can keep track of where victims are
- Use of social media to target vulnerable young people
- Sexting – the “exchange of sexual messages or images” and “creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images” through mobile phones and the internet’

## Types of Violence Against Women and Girls

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** – involves complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia in young girls for none medical reasons

**Forced Marriage** – where one or both people do not (or cannot in cases of learning disability) consent to marriage.

**Honour Based Abuse** – committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of the family and/or community.

**Prostitution and Trafficking** – where threats, coercion or deception are used to force entry into prostitution and/or keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude. This can be over short distances locally as well as across international borders.

**Sexual Violence and Rape** – any sexual contact without consent and can include intimate partners.

**Sexual Exploitation** – situations where someone is threatened, coerced or receives something as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual activities.

**Sexual Harassment** – unwanted online, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Stalking** – repeated harassment which can include spying on or following the victim, phone calls, texts, letters and damaging property.

**Non-fatal Strangulation and Suffocation** - non-consensual

**Image Based Sexual Abuse and Revenge Porn** – posting on images online

**Stealthling** - removal of condom without consent.

**Spiking** – as a means to enable sexual assault to occur.

### **Action by Broxtowe Borough Council**

The Communities Team provides a preventative and reactive response to violence. The preventative elements are delivered through the Violence and Knife Crime, the Broxtowe Crime Reduction and the White Ribbon Action Plans. The reactive elements are developed following data analysis which indicates a spike in violence in a location. A profile can be developed to assist the Police and Communities Team to problem solve the issue and react to the threat posed such as the activity in Stapleford following the murder of a young person. This method of working enables agencies to respond to emerging threats in the public realm.

Specialist agencies have been commissioned to provide high quality support services for victims of violence within domestic settings (Domestic Abuse) and to carry out preventative work including working with children and young people in schools and with men and boys through sports clubs, music venues and licenced premises.

The following actions will be taken by the Council in order to work towards achieving the aim of this strategy.

***Build on existing strong multi agency partnerships to deliver improved outcomes***

- Appoint the Head of Communities and Crime, the Communities and Crime Manager and the Senior Communities Officer Violence and Domestic Abuse as the Councils Points of Contact for issues relating to Serious Violence and Domestic Abuse.
- Continue to work in Partnership and work with all relevant partners, including Police, Neighbouring Councils, Commissioned Services, Education, Health, Voluntary Sector etc.
- Ensure appropriate secure multi agency information sharing systems are in place.
- Deliver existing partnership based action plans which contribute to improving safety for women and girls in the evenings including the Purple flag action plan
- Continue to be active members of the Strategic Violence Reduction Board which oversees strategic coordination serious violence prevention and reduction City and County wide.
  
- Continue as an active member of;
  - The Safer Notts Board
  - The South Notts Community Safety Partnership
  - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Meetings (MARAC)
  - The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
  - The Domestic Abuse Steering Group
  - The White Ribbon Steering Group
  - The Serious Organised Crime Board
  - Organised Crime Gang Management Meetings
  - The Nottinghamshire Assurance, Learning and Implementation Group
  - The Child Sexual Exploitation Concerns Network
  - Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption Meetings
  - County Criminal Exploitation Panel Meetings
  - The Violence and Criminal Exploitation Steering Group
  - The Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership
  - The Broxtowe Safeguarding Children's Workshops
  - The District Officers Safeguarding Group
  - The Anti Social Behaviour Group
  - The Sanctuary and Safe Accommodation Group
  - The Safeguarding Assurance and Development Group
  - CHANNEL Panel Meetings (PREVENT)

***Work in partnership to create safer streets and public spaces***

- Support and regularly review the provision of CCTV static and mobile cameras and monitoring arrangements, including implementing new cameras as agreed through the Safer Streets bid 4 and CCTV camera Broxtowe Borough Council most recent review.
- Systematically review the security of our parks and open spaces

***Raise awareness of support available to improve reporting***

- Provide awareness training for staff through Broxtowe Learning Zone and enhanced face to face training is available to front line officers.
- Provide training for elected members on relevant aspects of identifying and reporting Violence and Domestic Abuse.

***Increase public confidence and feeling safe***

- Undertake public consultation regarding the opinions of women and girls regarding their feelings of safety in Broxtowe and track movement over time.
- Ensure relevant mandatory training on safeguarding is given to taxi drivers as a condition of their licence.

***Reduce the number of incidents through education and early intervention***

- Ensure individuals identified as high risk perpetrators through the Knife Crime Cohort, CHANNEL Panel (PREVENT) Meetings, Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption Meetings and the County Criminal Exploitation Panel Meetings are managed appropriately.
- Deliver the violence and knife crime action plan
- Make bids to augment available funds for safety initiatives which impact positively on women and girls, eg Safer Streets funding and bids to the Police and Crime Commissioner

***Enable victims and survivors to access high quality support services***

- Ensure access to safe accommodation is available for domestic abuse survivors
- Provide access to Sanctuary support to enable victims to stay in their own homes by improving security.
- Coordinate the Broxtowe White Ribbon Domestic Abuse Steering Group and deliver the White Ribbon Action Plan.
- Maintain White Ribbon Accreditation.
- Coordinate Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in the Borough and implement learning across all departments.

## Action by Elected Members

The following actions will be taken by Elected Members in order to work towards achieving the aim of this strategy.

- Act as 'Eyes and Ears' of local communities – councillors are well connected with their local communities and can listen to the concerns of local residents and share community intelligence with officers.
- As decision-makers, where necessary, councillors should understand their local violence and domestic abuse profile and give a high profile to policy interventions and make the issue a political priority for action
- Promote the importance of partnerships, multi-agency working and information sharing to solving the problem of Serious Violence, Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls.
- As scrutineers, investigate the work that the council and its partners are doing and reduce its vulnerability to Serious Violence, Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls, encouraging continuous improvement.

## Governance and Delivery

This strategy will be primarily delivered through the Violence and Knife Crime Action Plan and the White Ribbon Action Plan which addresses Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

Both Action Plans are Multi Agency and there is a multi-agency White Ribbon Steering Group in place to ensure that delivery meets the accreditation standards.

Action plans are monitored by members through Cabinet Reports, Pentana Reports and Members Matters Publications.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee also have a role in scrutinising areas of delivery.

## Equalities

This strategy recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls and that men, boys and non-binary people are also affected by issues which encompasses Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls.

It is important to ensure that appropriate service responses are in place for support and that age, gender, culture, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and mental health may be an additional barrier to reporting or seeking help.

### **Indicators of Progress**

Progress will be monitored by members primarily through business plan progress reports and progress reports on the delivery of relevant action plans in Members Matters. In addition, the indicators below can also be used to monitor progress.

- Violence with Injury data
- Referrals to MARAC
- Repeat referrals to MARAC
- % repeat referrals to MARAC
- Referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme
- Applications to Housing for victims fleeing from Domestic Abuse
- Numbers of victims of Criminal Exploitation and County Lines referred to the Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption meetings for management
- Numbers of victims of Criminal Exploitation and County Lines referred to the County Child Criminal Exploitation Panel for management
- Maintenance of the Councils White Ribbon Accreditation status
- Completion of the White Ribbon Action Plan
- Completion of the Violence Action Plan
- Completion of the Broxtowe Crime Reduction Action Plan
- Attendance at meetings

### **Review**

This strategy shall be reviewed as changes to legislation and / or national policy require. The responsible officer shall be the Chief Communities Officer.

## The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

**The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. This 'landmark' Act will provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse and strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.**

**The Act will:**

1. Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that Domestic Abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic.
2. Establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers.
3. Provide for a new DA Protection Notice and DA Protection Order.
4. Place a duty on Local Authorities in England to provide accommodation-based support to victims of DA and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation (each relevant Local Authority in England must assess or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area; prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy).
5. Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
6. Create a statutory presumption that victims of DA are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (inc. giving evidence from behind a screen). Victims of DA will not have to satisfy the fear/distress test.
7. Clarify the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under Section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims.
8. Extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
9. Extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the 'revenge porn' offence) to cover threats to disclose such material.
10. Create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person.
11. Clarify by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
12. Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences (the Act extends the jurisdiction of the UK courts so that, where appropriate, UK nationals and residents who commit certain violent and sexual offences outside the UK may be brought to trial in the UK).
13. Provide for a statutory Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy.
14. Enable DA offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody (a 3-year pilot).
15. Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) on a statutory footing.

16. Provide that all eligible homeless victims of DA automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.

17. Ensure that where a Local Authority, for reasons connected with DA, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an Assured Shorthold Tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

18. Prohibit GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victim of DA for a letter to support an application for Legal Aid.

19. Provide for a statutory Code of Practice relating to the processing of DA data for immigration purposes.

**It is expected that most of the provisions in the Act will come into force during 2021/2022**

## Support Services

### Reporting

Incident	Police	101 (999 Emergency)
Crimestoppers		0800 555 111
Safeguarding	MASH	0300 50 80 90
Incident Concerning Council Employee		
	LADO	0115 977 3921
	HR Manager	3552

### Support

Juno Womens Aid		0808 800 0340
Broxtowe Women Project		01773 719 111
National Womens Aid		0808 200 0247
Equation Mens Helpline		0800 995 6999 / 0115 960 5556
Mens Advice Line		0808 801 0327
LGBTQ+ Gaylopp		0800 999 5428
Broxtowe Sanctuary Scheme		3492
IDVA Advocacy Service		01909 533 617
Victim Care (Domestic Abuse)		0808 168 9111
Childline		0900 1111
NSPCC Helpline		0808 800 5000
Midlands Womens Aid Refuge		0300 302 0033
Forced Marriage Unit		020 7008 0151
Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Service		0115 941 0440
East Midlands Child Sexual Assault Service		0800 183 0023
Institutional Child Sexual Assault Survivors Service		0115 950 8713
Education		<a href="https://equation.org.uk/work-with-young-people/">https://equation.org.uk/work-with-young-people/</a>
Support for Professionals		<a href="https://equation.org.uk/professionals/">https://equation.org.uk/professionals/</a>
Training		<a href="https://equation.org.uk/training/">https://equation.org.uk/training/</a>
Resources		<a href="https://equation.org.uk/resources/">https://equation.org.uk/resources/</a>