



Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

## **Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020–2023**

No resident living within or visiting Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole should live in fear of, or experience domestic abuse



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# Foreword

Domestic abuse can, and does, happen to anyone.

It is indiscriminate of age, gender, race, profession or social background. In the UK around one in four women and one in six men will be affected by domestic abuse in their lifetime, and the NSPCC reports that around one in five children have been exposed to domestic abuse. Whatever the number of those impacted by domestic abuse, it is too many; no one should live in fear.

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Community Safety Partnership (BCP CSP) is fully committed to playing our part to change this and to achieve our vision that 'No resident living within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole should live in fear of, or experience domestic abuse'.

As partners, together we are sending a clear message that domestic abuse will not be tolerated. We will work collaboratively to take robust action against abusers, change attitudes and behaviours and we will support victims to ensure that our communities are able to live the safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives that they deserve.

**Assistant Chief Constable Julie Fielding, Chair of BCP CSP**

# Introduction

This strategy sets out the key priorities for the BCP Community Safety Partnership in tackling domestic abuse and outlines the key areas for action over the next three years.

The BCP CSP was formed as a partnership in April 2019 following local government re-organisation. This is therefore our first Domestic Abuse Strategy which brings together the foundations of the work within the previous legacy local authorities and Pan-Dorset partners. We have taken the opportunity to rescale our ambition and reshape our response in this new strategy for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole geography.

Victims, survivors, their children and loved ones deserve help at the time of crisis and to be kept safe. They deserve help to cope and recover from the trauma, support from the criminal justice system to bring those responsible to justice, and action to drive this horrific, lifechanging crime from our society.

In developing this strategy, partners have worked together to consider how we can secure the best outcomes, learning from experience, considering evidence of need and looking at national best practice to frame our plans.

# What is domestic abuse: defining and understanding domestic abuse

The multi-agency definition of domestic 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

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.’

**Controlling or coercive behaviour** became law under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and helps us to better understand the above definition.

**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.

Controlling and coercive behaviour can manifest itself in many different forms and is not always visible to others. A few identified behaviours can include, restricting daily activities; isolation from family and friends; monitoring time; taking control over aspects of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what to wear; threats and intimidation; sexual abuse and violence; reproductive coercion; economic control and exploitation; extreme jealousy, possessiveness and accusations of infidelity; controlling partner’s access to information and services etc.

## Understanding the picture: national context

According to the national crime survey, 2.4 million adults experienced domestic abuse last year. Nationally, police recorded a total of 1,316,800 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes.

In November 2019, the Office for National Statistics published its latest overview of domestic abuse across England and Wales, it identified that referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision fell 11%, from 110,653 in the year ending March 2018 to 98,470 in the year ending March 2019.

In 2016, the Home Office launched the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. Although the strategy is aimed at women and girls, the principles can be applied to men and boys experiencing domestic abuse also. This strategy, alongside the Victims Strategy 2018, provides the context for the development of the Domestic Abuse Bill which will include new statutory requirements for local authorities and police forces.

Wider legislation helps us to understand the nature of domestic abuse from a statutory context. For example, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (s120) extended the definition of harm to include 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another'; which required children who witness domestic abuse at home to be considered in need of help and protection from the local authority, as well as those that are directly injured or abused. Likewise, the Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how the health and social care system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. It specifies that freedom from abuse (and neglect) is a key aspect of a person's wellbeing. In this way, the responsibility to respond to domestic abuse is held by all statutory agencies charged with safeguarding and protecting both adults and children.

In 2015, the national charity Safelives launched their report 'Getting it Right First Time'. The report highlighted the need to address and support both standard and medium risk victims. The emphasis is on identifying at an early stage every family where there is domestic abuse in order to prevent escalation and provide support. The report also highlighted that more than 100,000 people in the UK are at high and imminent risk of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of domestic abuse and 130,000 children live in homes where there is a high-risk of domestic abuse.

A study by UNICEF, 'Behind Closed Doors, The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children, 2006', found 'The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence.'

Information published in 2018 from IRISi, a third sector organisation working with General Practices (GPs) showed from April 2017-March 2018 the IRISi services received 3,159 referrals from 36 IRISi localities. Since April 2018, there were 5,252 referrals from 39 IRISi localities.

In 2015, the Social Care Institute for Excellence published information stating that people with care and support needs, such as older people or people with disabilities, are more likely to be abused or neglected. They may be seen as an easy target and may be less likely to identify abuse themselves or to report it. People with communication difficulties can be at risk because they may not be able to alert others. Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are being abused, and this is especially likely if they have a cognitive impairment. Abusers may try to prevent access to the person they abuse.



## Domestic abuse in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) is the twelfth largest resident population council area in England. Agencies working across BCP provide services to approximately 400,000 residents. It is estimated that 53,000 women and 31,333 men residing across BCP will or have experienced domestic abuse.

The demographic make-up of BCP is varied. The area attracts an older population whilst specific localities such as Bournemouth attract a younger client group, with a high volume made up of university students. Signs of domestic abuse are often hidden amongst both these demographics.

It is recognised that domestic abuse can have a detrimental impact of children and young people. 22% of the population size across BCP accounts for children and young people aged between 0-19. In May 2020, 31.7% of all children's social care contacts were attributed to domestic abuse. In June 2020, domestic abuse was prevalent in 18.1% of 'child in need' cases and 18.2% of child protection cases.

In 2019, 193 domestic abuse safeguarding concerns were raised with BCP Council Adult Social Care. This equates to

14.6% of all safeguarding concerns. Of those concerns 77 involved people aged 65 and over.

Local housing data states only a proportion of victims fleeing domestic abuse are found refuge accommodation, with only 2.9% being placed in refuges and 82% being placed in alternative temporary accommodation such as hostels and B&Bs.

Between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, Dorset Police recorded an increase of 31.9% in domestic abuse violent crime.

Between 1 April 2019 and June 2020, Dorset Police responded to 6,540 different victims of domestic abuse living within the BCP area. Of these, 1,122 were victims of two or more domestic related offences.

The BCP weekly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) commenced in April 2020. MARAC data for the first three months can be seen below. Dorset Police generate the majority of MARAC referrals (approx. 65%) and proactively participate in victim safeguarding as well as perpetrator management.

	Number of cases	Cases listed with children	Repeat cases
<b>April</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b> (67%)	<b>13</b> (19%)
<b>May</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>36</b> (68%)	<b>9</b> (17%)
<b>June</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>38</b> (58%)	<b>21</b> (32%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>120</b> (64%)	<b>43</b> (23%)

Across the 190 MARAC cases heard, a total of 651 actions were allocated, of which 630 were successfully completed.

In June 2020, the local probation service reported that of all the offenders open to their service living within BCP, 31% were identified as domestic abuse perpetrators. Of these perpetrators, 96% were male and 70% were aged 18-40.

Data provided by Dorset Police tells us that between 1 April 2019 and June 2020, 2985 offenders of domestic related crimes were identified who were responsible for 8259 offences. Of these, 867 offenders were responsible for two or more offences during these dates. Five male offenders were responsible for 10 or more domestic abuse related offences during that same time frame. 81% of offenders were male, 19% female and the average age of offenders was 36.

For the year April 2019 - March 2020, 30 males completed the Building Better Relationships Perpetrator Programme (on the back of a conviction order), a further 24 individuals had their order revoked due to non-compliance or reoffending and four individuals order finished so they did not complete the programme. The Up2U service is a bespoke civil Perpetrator Programme working with predominately Children's Social Care clients. In June 2019, the Poole based team had received 54 referrals, 23 of which successfully completed the program with no further reoffending. A further 10 participants were actively engaged with the programme.

## Domestic homicide reviews in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

**Domestic homicide reviews (DHRs)** came into effect on 13 April 2011. They were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Adults Act (2004).

“Domestic homicide review” means a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:

- (a) a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
- (b) a member of the same household as himself,

held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

Across the BCP area between 2016 and 2020 there were eight domestic homicides. Key themes that have been highlighted within completed DHRs include:

- the key role hospitals and GPs play in identifying and responding to domestic abuse

- the need for continued auditing and reviewing of our MARAC and Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) processes
- the increased risk caused by complex and overlapping needs
- how this can be a barrier for victims to access services safely
- adults with multiple disadvantage such as a learning disability or substance misuses often fall through the gaps within our referral pathways as service users can be assessed and supported in silos rather than a multi-agency approach
- the importance of raising awareness of domestic abuse and our local support services with family and friends of victims
- the importance of proactive positive action from Police in response to breaches of conditions
- the importance of service user engagement to support the development of services, policies and this strategy.

# Service provision and gap analysis Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

## Victim services

Victim services across BCP are offered through universal statutory service provision and that which is delivered through the voluntary and community sector. Victims have access to outreach support, however service provision is stretched and differs due to varying providers and contractual restrictions.

A specialist domestic abuse advisor service for high risk victims is offered through Dorset Police as an in-house provision. However, capacity is stretched and the ability to be the victim's voice during MARAC has been challenging. There are limited specialist services for victims who do not engage from the onset or struggle with engaging with agencies as a result in confidence and trust, cultural or language barriers, or a learning disability.

The BCP Domestic Abuse Health Advocacy Service, which works across Bournemouth and Poole hospitals received 42 referrals in a 3-month period. 19% of referrals were risk-assessed as high using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) tool. Although a valid service, the service is funded via a temporary grant for a 12-month period.

Services for victims of multiple disadvantage are limited. The pilot Domestic Abuse Specialist Practitioner Service (DASP) offered a bespoke person-centred service for victims of domestic abuse with additional disadvantages. However, the service cannot meet demand and there is a lack of skilled and experienced practitioners in the recruitment pool.

A significant programme of work is being undertaken to review the offer Adult Social Care have at our front door, which includes safeguarding and preventative work.

A holistic, whole family approach has been engineered through the work of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub; however, this is limited to working with families where children are present. Further ambitions to create a systemic whole family approach model is required.

Support for children and young people is offered through universal services and independently commissioned family intervention services; however, demand outweighs capacity and the service is restricted to specific localities across BCP.

There is now a vast and compelling body of research demonstrating the link between experiences of childhood

adversity and trauma and the development of detrimental health and social outcomes later in life. In simple terms, investing money in good quality, trauma-informed interventions for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse will help to reduce the impact in later life. Investment will also reduce the pressure on frontline services such as Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT), drug and alcohol services and housing.

Adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA) is an emerging issue we do not fully understand locally. Data does not paint a true picture of prevalence and severity. Data shows very little APVA reported but professionals within Early Help and Youth Offending are coming across a high number of cases. Across BCP we need to better understand the local picture and review best practice service models.

The Children and Young People's Domestic Abuse Recovery Toolkit is an eight-week programme for children and young people that have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse and are able to take part in a group. It uses a combination of trauma-informed resilience focused and specific trauma focused cognitive behaviour therapy and person-centred therapeutic principles. Across BCP the programme is delivered

sporadically within schools and is usually delivered as a result of additional funding. The toolkit has proved successful in working with a range of children and young people; however the capacity cannot meet demand and courses are limited.

In September 2020 the delivery of relationship and health education will become compulsory across all schools. The proposals, follow the publication of the Childhood Obesity Plan and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper, and will provide schools with material to be able to teach and delivery a relationship and health education programme. Further work will be required to support schools in understanding how healthy relationships can be accommodated as part of the role out as well and supporting their delivery across a wide range of age groups.

BCP Council were successful in securing additional funding for tackling parental conflict. This will support families who are dealing with conflict either through a breakdown in a relationship or other factors. The work will assist families in dealing with parental conflict and mitigating the risk of escalation. The funding for this work as part of an early help domestic abuse preventative offer is limited due to timescales.

## Perpetrator services

The offer to perpetrators is varied across BCP. Some first-time offenders are assessed and offered an intervention through an out of court disposal, whilst those on the back of conviction can be ordered to undertake group work intervention. A civil BCP offer is being delivered through the use of a bespoke one to one cognitive behaviour therapy programme. The civil programme has proved successful in reducing reoffending rates and reducing risk whilst supporting families in maintaining their unit. However, demand for the service outweighs capacity and funding for the continuation or expansion of the service is limited.

There is currently no provision for working with domestic abuse serial perpetrators who do not engage in services. The Integrated Offender Management unit provides a joint multi-agency approach to managing serial perpetrators in the community but does not offer any therapeutic behaviour change interventions.

The new Domestic Abuse Bill will refer to local areas commissioning safe, effective perpetrator programmes.

## Accommodation support

Across BCP two refuges operate which support female victims of domestic abuse with the ability to accommodate one male victim or a couple. Local housing data states only a proportion of victims fleeing domestic abuse are found refuge accommodation, with only 2.9% being placed in refuge and 82% being placed in alternative temporary accommodation such as hostels and B&Bs. Also, the refuges in their current state do not accept clients with multiple needs such as mental health and/or substance misuse. As part of the Domestic Abuse Bill, BCP Council Housing services are committed to reviewing support and accommodation commissioning arrangements across the BCP area. The annual needs assessment will provide the opportunity to establish the support and accommodation needs of local victims and families who wish to stay in the area and remain safe, as well as those fleeing from other areas.

## Our vision

No resident living within or visiting Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole should live in fear of, or experience domestic abuse.

## Our principles

**We will ensure** service users are at the centre of our work

**We will respond** to our local need based on a needs assessment and lessons learnt from domestic homicide reviews

**We will work collaboratively** to ensure a consistent zero tolerance response to domestic abuse is embedded in all local services

**Priority 1**  
**Preventing violence and abuse**

**Priority 2**  
**Provision of services**

**Priority 3**  
**Partnership working**

**Priority 4**  
**Responding to perpetrators**

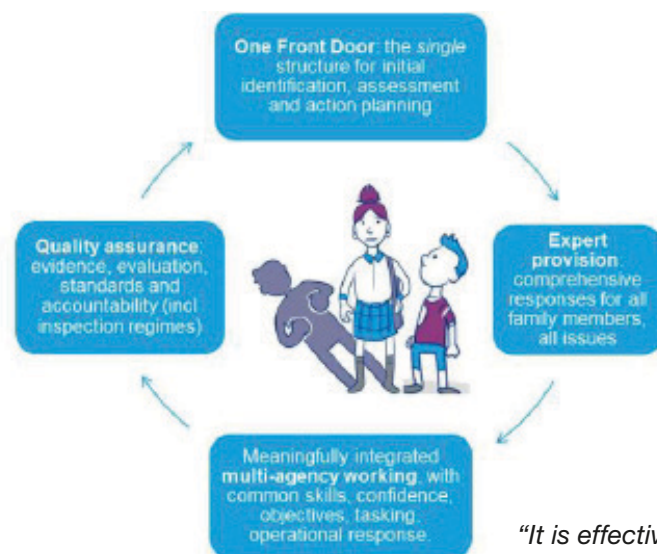


# Delivering our priorities through commitments to change

## 1 Preventing violence and abuse

- ◆ We commit to working to develop a “whole family, whole picture” approach across all of our services. Any victim, offender or witness has access to an open door into a system of joined-up support thanks to a coordinated multi-agency response.

The SafeLives model of the “One Front Door” approach offers victims of domestic abuse the following:



*“It is effective and it really does work”* Service Lead, One Front Door pilot site

The One Front Door model is underpinned by six principles which are required to meet the needs of families experiencing domestic abuse:

- A transformation of systems, processes and responses
  - Better support for children and young people who live in fear
  - Creating long-term change, not short-term fixes
  - Disrupting those that abuse; perpetrators challenged and held to account
  - Engaging the ‘whole family’ means more opportunity to make people safe, sooner
  - Families do not operate in silos, and neither must we.
- ◆ We commit to mobilizing a one front door model that underpins the six principles, whilst developing a model that meets collective partnership arrangements across BCP and that meets the needs of the demographic.



## 2 Provision of services

- ◆ We commit to co-commissioning services for victims, perpetrators and children impacted by domestic abuse. This will ensure we have services in place that are effective in assessing and responding to multiple needs and avoid seeing service users through a one-dimensional lens. Our aspiration is to have a domestic abuse service that responds to all victims, perpetrators and children impacted by domestic abuse.
- ◆ We will commit to streamlining victim pathways supporting all victims without prejudice. We will commit to the availability of civil perpetrator programs that support perpetrators and reduce the risk to victims and children. We commit to seeing children and their support needs through the services we offer.
- ◆ We commit to a comprehensive needs analysis of housing provision is required. As a result, we will better support victims, perpetrators and children impacted by domestic abuse of different ages, genders and ethnicities. We will be able to better support those with multiple disadvantage such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, substance misuse issues and mental health issues.

### 3 Partnership working

- ◆ We commit to working collaboratively to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse across BCP. We will ensure that all victims of domestic abuse are offered and signposted to services.
- ◆ We commit to intervening early to prevent harm and reduce the risk to victims and their families. We will strengthen our partnership arrangements, from our strategic plans to our frontline practice in order to identify and respond to domestic abuse as early as possible in an effective, co-ordinated way.
- ◆ We commit to sharing information for the reduction in crime, disorder and the protection and safeguarding of victims and their families. We will ensure the myths attributed to sharing information are removed and provide the legislative backing to do so.

- ◆ We commit to driving forward a cultural change across our organisations to challenge attitudes and increase public confidence. We will ensure a programme of training for our professionals to equip them in dealing effectively with disclosures and minimising the trauma for victims.

### 4 Responding to perpetrators

- ◆ We commit to supporting criminal justice agencies in pursuing serial perpetrators through the criminal justice system.
- ◆ We commit to supporting victims in accessing civil routes in the absence of criminal proceedings. We will ensure that we listen to the voice of the victim and support them in making informed choices.
- ◆ We will commit to challenging and changing the behaviour of perpetrators through the availability of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes across BCP.

# Our response objectives

## Priority 1

### Preventing violence and abuse

- All victims regardless of race, age, gender or sexuality receive appropriate service provision
- Victims, families and friends know where to go for help and support and can access a single service pathway
- The BCP MARAC is effective, protects victims and reduces the risk of further harm
- The workforce across BCP is skilled and knowledgeable in identifying and responding to domestic abuse
- Children and young people have the skills to identify and develop healthy relationships
- Children and adults living with domestic abuse and those who have care and support needs are safeguarded.

## Priority 2

### Provision of services

- Our services will be co-produced, co-delivered and co-evaluated with our service users
- Irrespective of where a victim lives in BCP they will be able to access a service quickly, fairly and easily
- Specialist services will be available to victims in a number of different settings, across the statutory and community voluntary sector
- We will review and improve our practice, ensuring that lessons learnt are shared across agencies
- We will ensure services are equipped and have the capacity to respond to existing and emerging issues.

## Priority 3

### Partnership working

- We will work with a range of corporate, statutory, community and voluntary and sectors to protect the most vulnerable through effective information sharing practices
- Service provision will be reviewed with partners and service users to ensure the delivery of meaningful outcomes for clients
- Good practice will be highlighted and shared as well as lessons learnt from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

## Priority 4

### Responding to perpetrators

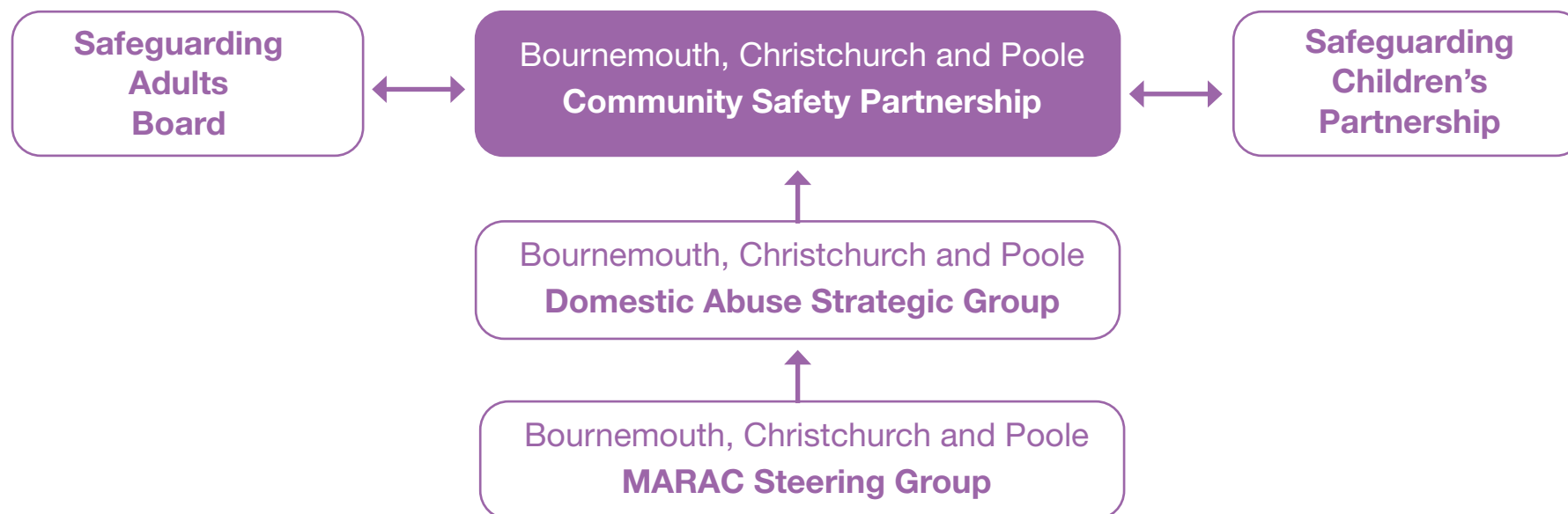
- Serial perpetrators of domestic abuse will be held to account and pursued through the criminal justice system
- We will increase the number of victimless prosecutions where appropriate
- We will prioritise the safety of victims and children by utilising the full range of powers available, both criminal and civil
- Perpetrators will be offered help to change their behaviour through effective interventions
- Restorative practice will be considered where applicable.

## Governance and accountability

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Community Safety Partnership is responsible for and committed to ensuring the successful delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and its ambitious commitments to change.

A comprehensive delivery plan will be developed, implemented and monitored by the BCP Domestic Abuse Strategic Group, which will report into the BCP Community Safety Partnership.

The BCP Community Safety Partnership is interlinked with the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, where Domestic Abuse are key priorities.



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