



Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

SAFER BCP
PERPETRATOR
STRATEGY

2026-2031

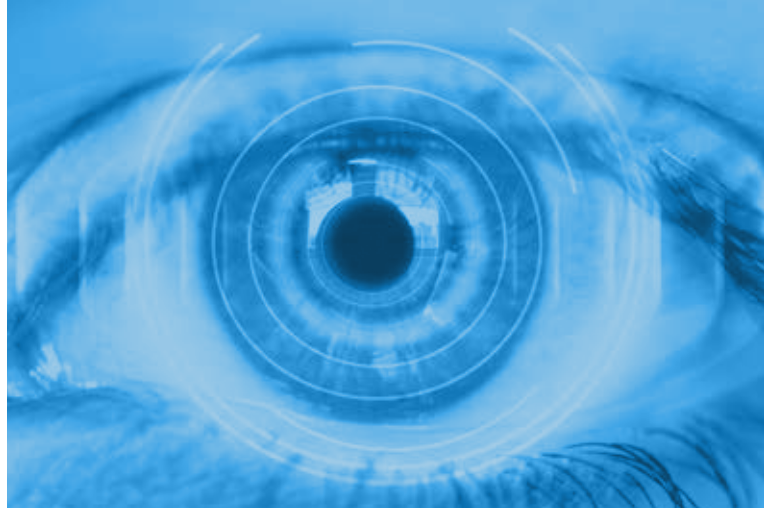


BCP Council, Dorset Police,
Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue
Services, The Probation Service
and Our Dorset

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THE VISION



The BCP Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy, 2026-2031 supports and underpins the delivery of the overarching BCP Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-2031 and as such, both strategies should be read alongside each other.

Our collective vision for the BCP Council area is for every adult and child experiencing domestic abuse to be seen, be safe and be heard, and free from the harm caused by perpetrator behaviour. This strategy aligns with two of the main priorities from the BCP Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-2031:

■ PREVENT

Recognising that the best way to deal with domestic abuse is to stop people from becoming perpetrators and victims to begin with; and

■ PURSUE

Pursuing perpetrators and holding them accountable for their actions.

Domestic abuse can only end if we address those that are perpetrating the abuse. This means giving those who have used abusive behaviours the chance to change and to have a system in place to challenge those not willing to change.

We will address abuse in all its forms while also exploring other factors which are likely to have contributed to the abusive behaviours.

It is essential that we stop asking **'Why won't they leave'** and start thinking **'Why don't they stop?'** and that responsibility is put on the perpetrator rather than the victim/survivor to allow both parties to move forward with a healthy understanding of a relationship.

The Istanbul Convention article 12, highlighted that the rehabilitation of perpetrators is a key tool in any initiative or action against gender-based violence.

By working with perpetrators of domestic abuse we aim to positively improve the lives of those around them, including their children whose voices are sometimes not heard. Preliminary research by Bournemouth University has identified that users of our current perpetrator behaviour change programme, UP2U; Creating Healthy Relationships (Up2U:CHR), have noted benefits to relationships more generally – for example with employers and others in addition to ex/partners and children.¹

By working in partnership with other agencies and those who have experienced domestic abuse it can help tackle the problem and find solutions.

The objectives of this strategy will form an action plan which will be delivered by the BCP Perpetrator Working Group who will report back to and have overseeing governance through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG). Key performance indicators developed to measure the effectiveness of the BCP Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 – 2031 will also cover this strategy.



Never even crossed my mind – the impact of my behaviour
and the effect it has on other people, because again,
I always had this thought that I was king of the castle.
It never crossed my mind until now...

Participant, Project Mirabel, 2015.



¹ Cole, 2025, personal communication.

THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL PICTURE

When considering our response to those that use domestically abusive behaviours, it is essential we look at both the national and local picture.

Research around perpetrators of domestic abuse remains comparatively low compared to studies on domestic abuse and survivors, but the studies which have been done show positive results for behaviour change programmes, evidencing the need for them as a valuable response to domestic abuse.

In the BCP Council area, data from the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which focusses on cases of high-risk domestic abuse tells us that 95% of the perpetrators of the abuse in cases heard at MARAC were male, with the majority between the ages of 20 and 49 years old and of White British ethnicity.



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- **734** MARAC cases were heard in BCP 2023-2024. ²
- **161** cases were repeat cases at MARAC, meaning 22% were presented to MARAC more than once within a 12-month period. ³
- **5,467** domestic abuse crimes were reported to Dorset Police in 23-24. ⁴
- **2,216** of the police recorded crime occurrences involved repeat victims, accounting for 40% of all domestic abuse recorded crime. 72% of these occurrences also involved repeat suspects. This suggests that 72% of repeat victims were victimised multiple times as part of the same relationship. ⁵
- **26%** of victims experienced four or more recorded DA crimes in the financial year 2023/24. ⁶
- **898** individuals were repeat suspects. These 898 individuals were involved in 2,443 recorded domestic abuse crimes. ⁷

² BCP Council, BCP MARAC Annual Update 2023-2024.

³ BCP Council, BCP MARAC Annual Update 2023-2024.

⁴ BCP Council, Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023-2024.

⁵ BCP Council, Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023-2024.

⁶ BCP Council, Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023-2024.

⁷ BCP Council, Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023-2024.

- Our BCP Perpetrator Programme, Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships (Up2U:CHR), received **121** enquiries and 78 referrals in 23-24. This was a **90%** increase in referrals on the previous year.⁸
- Using the Greater Manchester New Economic Unit cost database, the Up2U:CHR programme saved BCP Council and local services **£749,714** due to the reduction in abusive behaviours by those who completed the programme, evidencing that victims/survivors, including children, experienced a reduction of harm.⁹

NATIONAL

- **Over 80%** of domestic abuse survivors agree that perpetrator programmes are an essential part of the support intervention.¹⁰
- There are approximately **400,000** perpetrators causing high (including murder) and medium levels of harm across England and Wales, and yet only a tiny percentage of these access behaviour-change programmes.
- **Fewer than 1%** of perpetrators get a specialist intervention that might prevent future abusive behaviour.¹¹
- A recent study showed a **30% reduction** in the number of criminal Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) incidents amongst a cohort of perpetrators receiving an intervention compared to the control group.¹²
- A perpetrator intervention was found to have a **65% reduction** in DVA related offending and a social return on investment of £14 for every £1 spent.¹³
- In 2015, Project Mirabal was published with the results of a 5 year investigation into the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes in the UK. They found that:
 - those injured as a result of violence fell from 61% to just 2%.
 - two forms of abuse, use of a weapon (30%) and pressure to unwanted sexual activity (29%) stopped completely.
 - potentially lethal behaviours (strangle, choke, drown, smother) dropped from 50% to 2%.
 - lower risk violence (punch, kick, burn, beaten) also fell to 2% from 54%.¹⁴

⁸ BCP Council, Up2U CHR Annual Update, 2023-2024.

⁹ BCP Council, Up2U CHR Annual Update, 2023-2024.

¹⁰ SafeLives, Every Story Matters, 2018.

¹¹ Respect, DVPP Commissioning Guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners, 2013.

¹² Professor Marianne Hester et al, University of Bristol, Evaluation of Year 2 of the Drive Project – A Pilot to Address High Risk Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse 2019.

¹³ Northumbria University, An evaluation of the MATAC approach, 2017.

¹⁴ Kelly and Westmarland, Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps Towards Change, Project Mirabal Final Report, 2015.

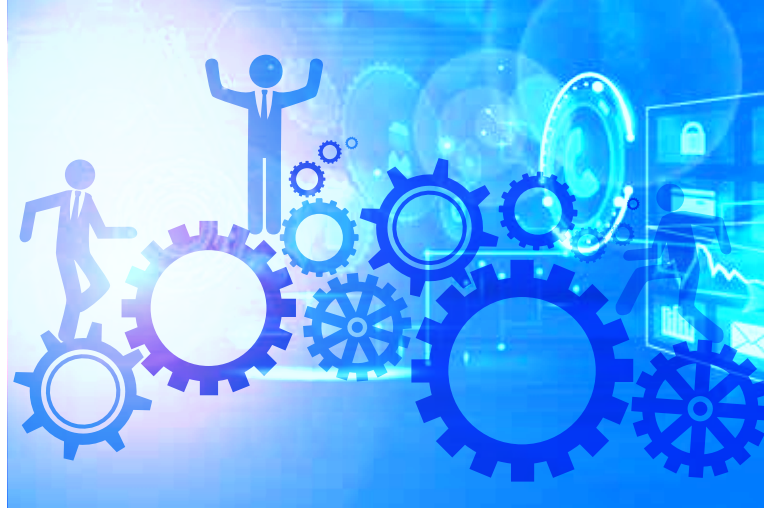
OUR CURRENT WORK AROUND PERPETRATING BEHAVIOUR

UP2U: Creating Healthy Relationships (CHR) – is a programme designed to help perpetrators of domestic abuse learn about healthy relationships, develop new skills and break the cycle of violence.

The programme involves a five-week assessment module that precedes the programme and determines risk levels based upon need rather than reoffending, which is a person-centred approach. This is followed by one-to-one sessions led by experienced facilitators who support perpetrators in understanding the impact of their actions, recognising unhealthy patterns and adopting positive behaviours. The programme is cognitive behaviour therapy based, tapping in to thinking and reasoning skills.

Participation is voluntary and self-referrals are also accepted as the service is committed to being preventative and supporting those who want to change their harmful behaviours.

Partner support is offered to enhance the safeguarding of victims/survivors, as well as working with bi-directional abuse couples.



The programme also works with people who have bail conditions and are in legal proceedings. Up2U:CHR is open to people of all genders and the programme pathways are tailored to the client's specific needs.

High Harm Perpetrator Panel (HHPP) Dorset

The HHPP is a group of different agencies that work together to deal with people who cause serious harm in cases of domestic abuse, stalking and sexually harmful behaviours.

The HHPP targets the most severe cases and serial offenders. The HHPP aims to:

- protect victims/survivors and children from harm.
- help offenders change their behaviour.
- stop offenders from committing more crimes.

Project CARA

Conditional Cautioning and Relationship Abuse

Project CARA applies a conditional caution to an offender to attend CARA workshops. The workshops allow the offender to reflect on their behaviour and access wider support services. The aims of the course are to:

- reflect on the offence and path to CARA.
- learn what domestic abuse is.
- understand the effects on victims and offenders.
- recognise how domestic abuse harms children.
- identify personal risk factors and ways to manage conflicts safely.
- discuss accessing other services like mental health or substance use support.

The BCP Council and Bournemouth University Perpetrator Programme Review Project

This project aims to review local, national and international programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse and literature, alongside stakeholder engagement to make recommendations on a best practice model for a perpetrator programme.



It was an eye opener – thanks to this course that has given me and my partner more insight on how we can improve and maintain our relationship in a healthy way.

Hampshire and IOW Constabulary, Project CARA review, 2022.



THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BCP PERPETRATOR STRATEGY

- We will support and disrupt perpetrators to change their behaviour. We will act if they fail to stop or seek help – to break the cycle of domestic abuse.
- We will provide a programme for perpetrators to help them recognise and change their harmful behaviours.
- We will make sure victim/survivors are seen as experts in their own experience and have the opportunity to receive help.
- We will hear the voice of perpetrators to help shape their intervention.
- We will recognise that creating whole systems approaches for perpetrators greatly reduces the chances of them using harmful behaviours.
- We will end victim/survivor blaming and shaming through changing our language, attitude and collective culture.
- We recognise freedom is a fundamental human right and is most restricted by perpetrators.
- We need to stop asking why survivors don't leave and start asking why perpetrators don't stop.



Our aims

Our aim is to take a holistic approach to perpetrators to address all areas of their life and to help develop practical solutions to address these. We will look at the whole person and the factors around them which can influence them seeking help and support and their ability to change, such as drugs and alcohol for example.

Factors we know can influence an individual's ability to access support and activate change in their lives are:

- Housing
- Risk of Exploitation
- Finances
- Safeguarding
- Family
- Employment
- Emotional Health
- Offending
- Health
- Relationships
- Education
- Substance misuse

Using a holistic approach involves a coordinated response to those who use harmful behaviours, utilising specialist services and all services which may interact with perpetrators across the locality. We can engage with perpetrators and look to address any unmet needs and offer support. This robust response, alongside behaviour change programmes and holding perpetrators to account for their actions, will reduce domestic abuse across the BCP Council area.

OUR OBJECTIVES

We have set our objectives in the context of local and national research and data around perpetrators of domestic abuse. We will provide interventions and services to reduce the perpetration of domestic abuse across BCP Council area and in-turn reduce the suffering caused to the victim/survivors. We will do this by:

Providing perpetrator programmes

Filling gaps in provision with effective early intervention and behaviour change opportunities for all those that use harmful behaviours, including:

- Households with children.
- Any male or female perpetrator of DA assessed as low to very high risk.
- Young perpetrators of DA (16-24).
- Perpetrators of Adolescent Intimate Relationship Abuse.
- Young people involved in Child to Parent Violence (CPV.)
- High risk, repeat and serial perpetrators.
- Co-perpetrating couples.

Establishing Referral Pathways

- Establish and disseminate referral pathways for perpetrator programmes to colleagues and partners which are easy to access.
- Ensure our perpetrator programme is visible in local communities for those who want to self-refer without barriers.

Actively engaging marginalised communities

- Engage marginalised and/or isolated communities, including people from ethnic minorities, people from LGBTQ+ communities, people who are disabled and military personnel and their families through awareness raising and education directly into these communities.
- Consider the barriers to support due to intersectionality and inequality and enhance our response through education and action.

Supporting multi-agency engagement

- Establish a perpetrator working group to enhance relationships and look at solutions for data collection to evidence the outcomes from the perpetrator strategy.
- Encourage all agencies to be responsible for holding perpetrators to account.
- Support the co-working of those that use harmful behaviours to enhance a whole person response, to reduce the use of harmful behaviours by individuals.
- Continually review risk assessment processes to ensure multi-agency information sharing on perpetrators.
- Explore the pooling of partnership resources and funding to deliver services that meet our local need.

- Support a community training model across multi-agency sectors to support a cultural shift towards engaging perpetrators, promoting identification, engagement and signposting to referral pathways and look to best practice for enhanced training models across the perpetrator sector.

Evidence based approach

The Safer BCP Partnership is committed to ensuring that any domestic abuse perpetrator intervention is either a recognised accredited scheme, has proven outcomes or follows the principles laid out in the Respect Accreditation Standards and the national standards for perpetrator interventions and that any new approaches are held to these standards.

Respect Accreditation Standards:

- Do no harm
- Gender matters
- Safety first
- Sustainable change
- Fulfilling lives
- The system counts
- Services for all
- Respectful communities
- Competent staff
- Measurably effective services

The National standards for perpetrator interventions:

- The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be enhanced safety and freedom (space for action) for all victim-survivors, including children.
- Interventions should be located within a wider co-ordinated community response in which all agencies share the responsibility of holding abusive behaviour in view, enabling change in perpetrators and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors and children.
- Interventions should hold perpetrators to account, whilst treating them with respect, and offering opportunities to choose to change.
- The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time.
- Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.
- Interventions should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to domestic abuse.
- Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.

All professionals working with domestic abuse perpetrators in BCP Council area will ensure that any intervention takes place at the earliest opportunity and is safe, places the needs and safety of adult and child survivors at its heart and is delivered hand in hand with coordinated support for the survivor.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you or someone you know needs support around domestic abuse, there is help available from the organisations listed below and more information can be found here including:

Help with domestic abuse | BCP

Local support organisations:

- BCP BCHA Domestic Abuse Referrals & Support Line 01202 710 777
- BCP Refuge 01202 547 755
- Sexual Trauma and Recovery Service (STARS) 01202 308 855
- Victim Support Dorset 0300 303 0163
- Paragon Dorset 0800 032 5204



There are also national organisations which can help:

- 'By and For' services
- National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247
- The National Centre for Domestic Violence 0800 970 2070
- Women's Aid 0808 2000 247
- Mankind Initiative 01823 334 244

Link to other Strategies:



BCP DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATOR PATHWAY

Purpose

This document has been created to provide agencies and practitioners with an understanding and overview of the various domestic abuse perpetrator programmes and interventions on offer in BCP Council area. This document includes:

- Details of the perpetrator programmes and interventions on offer in BCP, who they are for, and how to access them.
- Details on how the programmes and interventions link into wider multi-agency information sharing and risk management processes for people experiencing domestic abuse.
- An illustration on pathways for those cases that involve children, and those that don't.
- Reference to further information on the support services available to people affected by domestic abuse.

Please note, this document doesn't aim to replace any individual agencies or practitioners' responsibilities for safeguarding and/or risk management processes. Please always consult with your line manager and/or agency leads for domestic abuse where these are available. This document is for illustration and information purposes only.



Governance

This document is overseen by the BCP Community Safety Partnership and the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group. This document will be updated periodically.

For more information, please contact the document author.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead
Community Safety Team
BCP Council
communitysafetyBCP@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

UP2U Family Practice Model

Description

Up2U Family Practice is a therapeutic 'behaviour change' programme to support individuals in recognising and managing thoughts and feelings and having healthier relationships.

Who it's for

Parents/Carers who have unhealthy relationships with children, partners, family members, professionals or other adults; where there is parental conflict or Low risk domestic abuse. Also suitable for Children/Young People who are using unhealthy behaviours towards parents, siblings, friends, other children or other adults.

How to refer in

Referrals are made through children's social care when a family is already known to them.

UP2U Creating Healthy Relationships

Description

Up2U: Creating Healthy Relationships (Up2U:CHR) is a programme developed by Portsmouth City Council for people who use domestically abusive behaviours in their intimate partner relationships. Up2U:CHR is an assessment led intervention programme responding to individual need, risk and responsivity by offering tailored packages of support.

Who it's for

Up2U is a needs-based intervention, the programme which can be tailored to work with all genders from the age of 16 and can be delivered to people who use domestically abusive behaviours in same sex relationships. When someone is accepted onto Up2U, support is offered to their partner/ex-partner to ensure ongoing safety and risk management. To be eligible for referral, a person must accept that they use abusive or unhealthy behaviours in their relationship and want to change these behaviours.

How to refer in

Self and professional referrals accepted.

All referrals should go to the central referral centre.

Email: Up2U@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Project CARA – Conditional Cautioning & Relationship Abuse

Description

Conditional Cautions with the condition for the offender to attend the CARA workshops enables the offender to be held accountable for their actions in a proportionate and meaningful way whilst respecting the views of the victim. The workshops allow the offender to reflect on their behaviour and access wider support services.

The aims of the course are as follows:

To reflect on offence and journey to CARA, gain understanding of domestic abuse, understand the effects of domestic abuse on themselves and victims, recognise the damaging effects of domestic abuse on children, establish personal risk factors, short term time out strategies and safe conflict within an intimate relationship, identify future goals & strategies following CARA.

Who it's for

- Adult males 18+
- No previous convictions or cautions for DA in the previous two years
- Relationship between parties: Present or past intimate partners only
- Eligible offences: minor assaults categorised by law as common assault and battery, criminal damage, harassment, threatening behaviour, domestic theft related offences
- Admission and (Crown Prosecution Service agree overwhelming evidence is present) no possibility of an offence
- Past minor convictions permitted unless offender is currently serving a community-based sentence or order

How to refer in

Dorset Police internal only using the below process.

In order to make the decision to issue an offender with a Conditional Caution for a domestic abuse offence and then to set CARA as the condition you must ensure you first follow the Adult OoCD Domestic Abuse and Conditional Caution flowchart followed by the Is CARA Appropriate? guidance. All decisions must be authorised by a suitably trained Sergeant. The Adult OoCD team will check all CC's issued and if CARA is being set incorrectly as the condition these may be sent back for the Conditional Caution to be re-issued.

Probation Services

Description

Building Choices is a cognitive-behavioural programme, consisting of group and one to one sessions. Determined by an assessment of risk and need, The programme supports skill development in emotion management, healthy thinking, healthy relationships, sense of purpose, and healthy sex where relevant.

Building Choices provides a structured opportunity to learn, strengthen and practice skills and behaviour that targets areas of common criminogenic need without defining or limiting what participants can address by offence labels. A need led approach enables participants to personalise criminogenic needs by considering how areas apply specifically to themselves and what skills will personally be important to develop. Overall, Building Choices enables participants to develop skills for change and future focused goals that may support them in building a crime free life.

Who it's for

The programme is suitable for all genders aged 18 and above, who are assessed as posing a medium or high risk of causing serious harm. And it is suitable for people with Learning Disability & Challenges (LDC).

How to refer in

Referral into the programme is made at court and ordered by the residing judge and/or pre-sentencing recommendations and forms part of the sentencing requirement for individuals in the criminal justice system. Alternatively, it can be a Licence requirement for those being released from custody on Licence.

Restorative Justice Dorset

Description

Restorative Justice (RJ) processes bring those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm into communication with each other, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

RJ has a proven, significant impact in supporting victims in achieving closure and allowing them to move on with their lives. 85% of victims who have participated in Restorative Justice would recommend it to others.

Who it's for

Referrals for restorative justice involving incidents of domestic abuse are only considered if they are victim initiated.

There must be an identifiable victim, an identified harmer or charged offender, and an admission of responsibility or a guilty plea/finding of guilt if the case is proceeding through the courts system.

No offence is excluded but all cases are subject to a multi-agency risk assessment as to suitability for a RJ intervention.

The service is free of charge, voluntary and impartial. If a victim or offender is being supported by a CJS agency or partner, we will update that organisation. About the outcomes of RJ activities and

How to refer in

The service takes referrals from the police, victims, victims' services organisations, offender management agencies and any other organisation that is working with victims or offenders.

Telephone: 07535 692669 / 07535 692584

Email: RJDorset@restorativesolutions.org.uk

Secure email RJDorset@restorativesolutions.org.uk.cjsm.net

Visit our website: rjdorset.org.uk

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE HIGH-RISK MULTI-AGENCY PROCESS FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

BCP Council area

MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

MARAC is a local, multi-agency, victim focused process, where information is shared on victims identified as being at highest risk of harm following domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies within the BCP Council area and solutions / actions created to address the risks.

Referring into MARAC -this includes guidance on how to complete a SafeLives DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence) risk assessment.

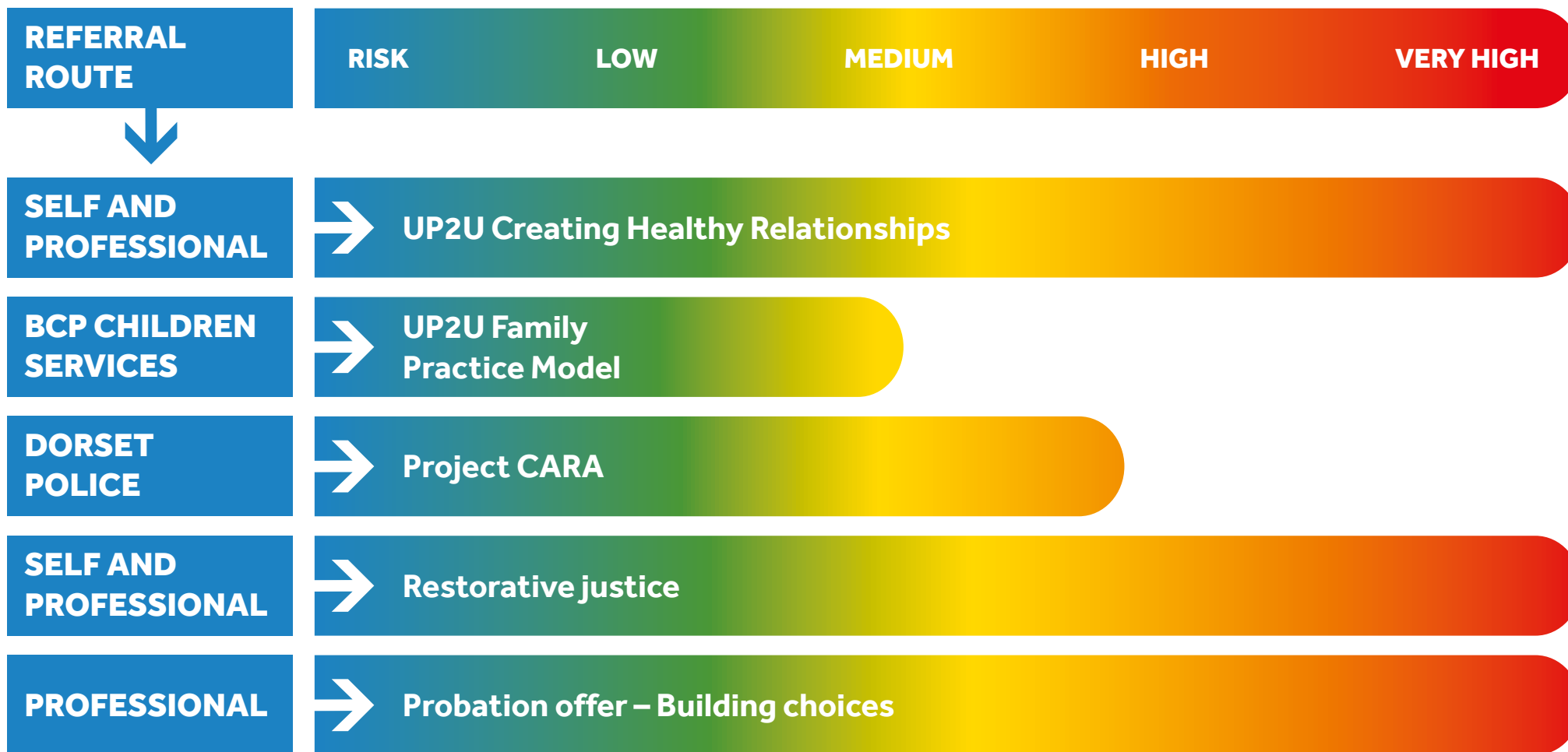
Further information on the support available

- Help with domestic abuse | BCP
- Advice about domestic abuse | Dorset Police
- Respect respect.uk.net
- In an emergency call 999.

Safeguarding

- Worried about a child
- Worried about an adult at risk

BCP DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATOR PATHWAY



Always consider:

- Support for the person experiencing the abuse
- Safety planning for the person experiencing the abuse
- Wider support for children and family
- Safeguarding



SAFERBCP
Partnership

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