

Report subject	Safer BCP (Community Safety Partnership) Domestic Abuse Strategies
Meeting date	22 nd July 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This Cabinet report accompanies the three Domestic Abuse Strategies as part of the Safer CSP Community Safety Partnership's commitment in response to Domestic Abuse in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: Cabinet approve: • The overarching Safer BCP Prevention of Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-31 • The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2026-31 • The Perpetrator Strategy 2026-31 • The accompanying Safe Accommodation & Community Services Commissioning Plan
Reason for recommendations	It is a statutory requirement under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 for local authorities to create a Safe Accommodation strategy every five years. These three strategies form the Council's strategic framework to preventing and respond to domestic abuse across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies. Whilst it is not a requirement to have a Perpetrator Strategy or an overarching Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy, the Community Safety Partnership have developed these complimentary strategies to focus on preventative, early intervention work and ensure that a holistic approach is taken to addressing domestic abuse and perpetrating behaviours in BCP. All three strategies have been developed through significant public consultation and development, including lived experience groups, Councillor task and finish group and wider stakeholder

	engagement. The commissioning plan that accompanies the strategies will inform the commissioning of our domestic abuse services in BCP.
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

- Domestic abuse remains a significant issue locally and nationally, with 5,467 domestic abuse crimes recorded in BCP in 2023/24 and high levels of repeat victimisation. The three strategies provide a whole-system, coordinated response aligned to statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including the requirement to deliver safe accommodation and support for survivors.
- The strategies are built on four overarching priorities:
 - Prevent abuse before it occurs
 - Protect and recover survivors
 - Pursue perpetrators and hold them accountable
 - Strengthen relationships through partnership working

Together, they set out a comprehensive approach addressing:

- Prevention and early intervention
 - Survivor support and housing provision
 - Perpetrator behaviour change and enforcement
 - Multi-agency coordination and data improvement
- Cabinet approval is sought to formalise adoption and enable delivery through a multi-agency implementation plan. Throughout the strategies we refer to those affected as 'Survivors' of Domestic Abuse. This is to reflect the strength and courage they have

shown in response to the harm that has been levied against them and also the feedback from our lived experience group.

4. Domestic abuse is a complex and pervasive issue affecting individuals, families and communities regardless of background. Nationally, 2.3 million people experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024, with domestic abuse also being a leading cause of homelessness.

Locally:

- 734 high-risk MARAC cases were heard in 2023–24
- 40% of recorded crimes involved repeat victims
- 898 repeat suspects were linked to 2,443 offences

Domestic abuse also has significant impacts on children, who are recognised in law as victims where they experience or witness abuse.

5. BCP Council and partners have statutory duties relating to domestic abuse under:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Serious Violence Duty

These strategies respond to those duties and build on the previous 2020–2025 strategy. The three strategies operate as a suite of interdependent documents:

6. The “Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 - 2031” (Appendix 1) sets the overarching vision that no resident should live in fear of domestic abuse. It focuses on prevention, survivor support, perpetrator accountability, and partnership activity and embedding a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) approach to domestic abuse as recommended by SafeLives and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for the UK.
7. The “Safe Accommodation Strategy 2026 – 2031’ (Appendix 2) meets our statutory duty to provide support within safe accommodation. It establishes priorities including:
 - Prevention and early identification
 - Access to appropriate housing and support
 - Supporting survivors to remain at home or move on

It also responds to historical capacity challenges for support (e.g. 77% of refuge applicants not accepted historically).

8. The “Perpetrator Strategy 2026 – 2031’ (Appendix 3) focuses on changing behaviour and reducing reoffending; promoting a shift from “why doesn’t the victim

leave?” to “why doesn’t the perpetrator stop?”. It supports evidence-based interventions with proven reductions in reoffending.

Key Priorities and Objectives

9. Prevention and early intervention forms the foundation of our domestic abuse focus, particularly around:

- Increasing public awareness and education of domestic abuse and perpetrator behaviours
- Targeting children and young people (for support and education)
- Identifying abuse earlier and reducing escalation

10. Protecting and Supporting Survivors is also fundamental to our work, ensuring that we:

- Improve access to safe accommodation and community support
- Deliver trauma-informed, survivor-led services
- Address inequalities and barriers for marginalised groups

11. Tackling Perpetrators is key to breaking the cycle and preventing future abuse, and our focus here is on evidence driven practices including:

- Expanding access to behaviour change programmes
- Strengthening enforcement and accountability
- Developing integrated referral pathways

12. Partnership and System Leadership underpins the activity of the three strategies, ensuring accountability and challenge by:

- Strengthening our multi-agency governance (Domestic Abuse Strategic Group, Community Safety Partnership)
- Embedding Coordinated Community Response
- Improving data sharing and performance monitoring

Outcomes and Impact

13. The strategies aim to achieve:

- Reduction in domestic abuse prevalence and harm
- Increased safety and recovery outcomes for survivors
- Increased number of perpetrators engaging in interventions
- Improved housing stability and reduced homelessness

14. Safe accommodation investment will:

- Reduce homelessness linked to domestic abuse
- Improve long-term outcomes for children and families

15. Delivery of the three strategies will be funded through (Appendix 4 Safe Accommodation & Community Services Commissioning Plan):

- Existing Council budgets
- Government grants (including Safe Accommodation Grant funding)
- Partner contributions

16. Evidence shows that perpetrator programmes can reduce offending (e.g. 30% reduction in incidents and significant harm reduction outcomes). National evidence indicates strong value for money, particularly for early intervention programmes such as the UP2U Domestic abuse perpetrator programme which seeks to change harmful behaviours. The Up2U perpetrator programme saved approximately £749,714 in 2023/24 through reduced harm. Future commissioning and funding opportunities will be explored to sustain and expand provision.

17. The strategies have been informed by:

- Public consultation
- Lived experience surveys
- Experts by Experience Board
- Partner agency feedback
- Survivor voice has been central to development, ensuring services are trauma-informed and responsive.

Consultation Report Summary (Domestic Abuse Strategies 2025–2030)

18. Public consultation was undertaken on all three strategies between the 17th March 2025 and the 28th April 2025. The full consultation report is attached as Appendix 5 but in summary there was:

- **Strong support for the overall direction:**
Stakeholders broadly supported the proposed strategies, particularly the focus on prevention, survivor support, and holding perpetrators accountable.
- **Need for greater awareness and accessibility:**
Many respondents highlighted that people often do not know what services are available or how to access them, indicating a need for clearer communication and outreach.

- **Improving survivor experience:**
Feedback emphasised the importance of trauma-informed, person-centred support, with consistent, compassionate responses from professionals across all services.
- **Gaps in provision and inclusion:**
Respondents identified unmet needs for specific groups, including those with high complexity needs, disabled survivors, LGBTQ+ individuals, male victims, and those with no recourse to public funds.
- **Housing and accommodation challenges:**
Access to safe accommodation remains a key issue, with demand exceeding supply and limited options for people with larger families or complex needs.
- **Importance of early intervention and education:**
There was strong support for preventative work, including education in schools, public awareness campaigns, and earlier identification of abuse.
- **Focus on perpetrators welcomed:**
Contributors supported the emphasis on behaviour change programmes and stronger accountability, alongside early intervention with those using harmful behaviours.
- **Value of partnership working:**
Effective multi-agency collaboration was seen as essential, with calls for better coordination, data sharing, and clearer pathways between services.
- **Central role of lived experience:**
Respondents stressed the importance of continuing to involve survivors in shaping services to ensure they are relevant, effective, and responsive.

Commissioning of Domestic Abuse Services

19. The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Community Services Commissioning Plan (Appendix 4) sets out how the council will organise and improve services for people affected by domestic abuse. It brings together housing (safe accommodation) and community support into one joined-up system, so people can get the right help at the right time. The focus is on preventing abuse where possible, identifying it earlier, and helping more people stay safely in their own homes through outreach, security measures, and specialist support. For those who cannot stay at home, the plan expands access to different types of safe accommodation and ensures all services provide high-quality, trauma-informed support.
20. From August 2027, services will be redesigned into a single, more flexible model that combines community outreach with a range of accommodation options, including refuge and dispersed housing. The plan is supported by funding of £1.44 million per year, although there may be financial pressures in later years, which will be managed through efficiencies and future funding opportunities. A full procurement process will take place during 2026–2027 to appoint a specialist domestic abuse support provision to deliver high-quality services. Key risks, such as increased demand or

limited provider interest, have been identified, with plans in place to manage these and maintain effective support for residents.

Summary of financial implications

21. Appendix 4 details the financial implications of the commissioning of future services.

Summary of legal implications

22. The strategies support compliance with the:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (including safe accommodation duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding responsibilities

Adoption ensures the Council meets statutory requirements to:

- Assess need for survivors of domestic abuse
- Publish strategies
- Commission and monitor services

Implementation of the strategies will be overseen by:

- The BCP Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG)
- Safer BCP Partnership

23. Progress will be monitored through:

- Delivery plans
- Key performance indicators
- Annual reviews and reporting

Summary of human resources implications

24. No impact as a result of the adoption of the strategies.

Summary of sustainability impact

25. No impacts.

Summary of public health implications

26. The fundamental purpose of the three strategies is to address the significant mental, physical and financial impact that domestic abuse has upon our local communities.

Summary of equality implications

27. A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix 6). The research and data conducted for the three new Safer BCP domestic abuse strategies indicate people with protected characteristics and/or multiple disadvantage may have different experiences of domestic abuse and face additional barriers when disclosing domestic abuse and accessing support services.

Experiences of abuse through a gendered lens allows us to recognise the societal imposed norms, roles and expectations of masculinity and femininity and how this effects intimate partner relationships and family structures and considers power dynamics. Intersectionality theory explains the intersect between social categorisations applied to an individual or group which create an overlap of disadvantage and discrimination.

28. By using a gendered and intersectional lens to develop these strategies we can guide our response to domestic abuse across BCP Council area to ensure that all members of BCP can receive fair and equal treatment when accessing services. In relation to violence against women and girls and domestic abuse the barriers and discrimination survivors with intersecting identities face when accessing support around domestic abuse, are well documented, and the strategies have been developed with that in mind.

The Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy, Safe Accommodation Strategy and Perpetrator Strategy aim to address inequalities in access to information and services, by using the intersectional analysis to inform the strategies and the comprehensive delivery plans.

29. The overwhelming identification through research both locally and nationally is that those with protected characteristics and/or multiple disadvantage are:

- under-represented in DA services,
- struggle to access appropriate services which are culturally competent,
- a coordinated response from services is greatly variable leading to re-victimisation
- often experience societal and/or organisational discrimination in addition to the domestic abuse.

30. The survivors of domestic abuse affected are; women, men, LGBTQ+ people, BAME people, disabled people, older people and children and young people, as well as care experienced adults, pregnant women, people with mental health conditions, carers and armed forces families.

The strategies and delivery plans aim to eliminate the barriers faced by individuals with protected characteristics in BCP experiencing domestic abuse. By implementing the following methods, we anticipate achieving the following outcomes:

- Education and training of professionals and communities on protected characteristics, unconscious bias and intersectionality and domestic abuse.
 - Outcome: Increased awareness and understanding will lead to more effective and inclusive support.

- Commissioning of specialist domestic abuse community services and domestic abuse safe accommodation, with a requirement that the service providers are trained in protected characteristics and intersectionality,
 - Outcome: Improved understanding of the needs of those with protected characteristics and the support provided will lead to improved life outcomes.
- BCP domestic abuse safe accommodation will be modelled to meet the needs of all who may need to access it, including those with protected characteristics and/or multiple disadvantage.
 - Outcome: A safe supported environment will be provided for everyone regardless of their background and circumstances which will lead to improved life outcomes.
- Development of the survivor voice work to ensure the voices of all survivors and those that are currently underrepresented, inform the work we do in response to domestic abuse in BCP.
 - Outcome: Interventions will be better tailored to meet the needs of all individuals affected by domestic abuse, leading to improved support and life outcomes
- Targeted information is available to individuals with protected characteristics across BCP, so that they know the services understand their needs and are available for them.
 - Outcome: This will ensure individuals know the services understand their unique needs and are available to support them, leading to better access to resources and improved overall well-being.
- Community engagement is developed across BCP with individuals and communities which are underrepresented in domestic abuse services.
 - Outcome: Communities are better represented and their specific needs are addressed leading to more effective and comprehensive domestic abuse services.
- Professional relationships are further developed to ensure pathways of support are collaborative and consider the whole person.
 - Outcome: Support pathways will be integrated and comprehensive, addressing various aspects of an individual's needs.
- Work with both the BCP Safeguarding Adults Board and BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership around domestic abuse will be strengthened and pathways to support embedded within teams.
 - Outcome: An integrated and supportive environment for individuals affected by domestic abuse.
- Data collection will be improved so emerging themes and local need can be recognised and responded to.
 - Outcome: Emerging needs and trends are identified to ensure resources and services are directed to areas with the greatest need.
- Education of children and young people across BCP about violence against women and girl, domestic abuse and positive masculinity to help reduce sexual discriminatory behaviours.

- Outcome: There will be a safe and more inclusive environment for everyone.
31. A key positive outcome of the strategies is to improve domestic abuse support services in BCP, tailored to the diverse needs of survivors of domestic abuse and children, including those with protected characteristics, through commissioning specialist domestic abuse providers for community and safe accommodation services. Through community engagement and targeted materials, we will engage with all survivors of domestic abuse from underrepresented groups across BCP, reducing risk to these survivors and their children and improving longer term outcomes.
 32. There will be ongoing consultation with people who have lived experience of domestic abuse and work to engage underrepresented groups, to ensure that we continue to hear the voices of all survivors and respond to these using a co-production framework so these voices help shape the domestic abuse work across BCP.
 33. Through education and awareness raising with professionals and communities we aim for them to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse better but also the additional issues faced by marginalised members of the community and reduce discriminatory beliefs and behaviours across BCP.
 34. We will develop the BCP primary prevention offering, educating children and young people to help reduce current and future sexually discriminatory and sexually harmful behaviours.
 35. We will further develop the relationships across agencies and professionals, to ensure a joined up and whole person response to survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse, this will help to reduce risk, mitigate long term harm and improve longer term outcomes for all.
 36. The improved data collection will help to identify local needs and themes and enable the partnership to respond to domestic abuse in a more localised way whilst also learning from national research and data.
 37. Extensive consultation has been conducted, including a public consultation, consultation with the experts by experience board, the BCP domestic abuse survey, stakeholder workshops and domestic abuse provider events. This comprehensive approach ensures that the strategies are not developed in isolation and incorporate the perspectives of a diverse range of individuals and organisations, thereby meeting the needs of all.
 38. All three strategies will be reviewed annually from (2025-2030). The Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) will oversee the implementation through a detailed delivery plan and report to the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board every six months to ensure accountability and achievement of the strategy outcomes.

Summary of risk assessment

39. Funding from central government for Domestic Abuse services has not increased in line with inflation over the last 5 years, which when coupled with the pressure on local government resources places a risk upon our ability to deliver the level of

service we strive to achieve for survivors of domestic abuse. The following summarises our approach to trying to mitigate these pressures.

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity in services	Commissioning and partnership approach
Funding uncertainty	Diversified funding streams
Inconsistent data	Development of shared data framework
Barriers for marginalised groups	Targeted inclusion strategies

Background papers

Domestic Abuse [statutory guidance](#).

Appendices

Appendix 1- Prevention of Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-31

Appendix 2- Safe Accommodation Strategy 2026-31

Appendix 3- Perpetrator Strategy 2026-31

Appendix 4- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Community Services
Commissioning Plan

Appendix 5- Consultation Report

Appendix 6- Equality Impact Assessment