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# Bedford Borough Domestic Abuse Strategy

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2026 - 2031

## Contents

Foreword .....	3
What is Domestic Abuse? .....	4
Domestic Abuse Behaviours .....	4
Vision .....	6
Legal and Policy Context .....	7
Our Local Picture (Headline Needs) .....	8
Strategic Priorities .....	9
Priority 1 – Prevention: Reduce Harm and Intervene Earlier .....	9
Priority 2 – Immediate Needs: Support and Respond to Individual Needs .....	13
Priority 3 – Disrupt: Intervene with those who Cause Harm and Reduce Re-offending .....	17
Priority 4 – Partnership: Work with Partners to Deliver a Skilled Trauma-informed Workforce and Survivor-centred Culture .....	18
Priority 5 – Recovery: Embedding Long-term Recovery Pathways .....	19
Governance .....	20
Glossary of Terms .....	21

## Foreword

The publication of the 2026 - 2031 Domestic Abuse Strategy marks the next stage in our ongoing commitment to preventing domestic abuse, supporting survivors, and strengthening a coordinated community response across Bedford Borough. This strategy builds on the foundations laid since the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which introduced statutory duties for local authorities, including the requirement to assess local need, establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, and ensure that specialist support is available for those in safe accommodation.

These duties have provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on progress, review our previous strategy, and work closely with our partners to shape our next phase of delivery. Through detailed needs assessment, service mapping, and a system review which was carried out in collaboration with Catch Impact and Edzola, we have been able to understand the changing local picture, including rising and complex demand, pressures in housing and temporary accommodation, and areas where earlier, more coordinated intervention is needed.

This strategy is the result of extensive collaboration across the Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership, policing, education, health, social care, housing providers, voluntary sector organisations, and many other professionals who contribute daily to preventing harm and supporting those affected. We are deeply grateful for your continued commitment and expertise, which sit at the heart of our coordinated community response.

We would also like to express our sincerest thanks to those with lived experience. Survivors have generously shared their insights, perspectives and experiences, ensuring that this strategy is shaped by the voices of those most affected. Their contribution has guided our priorities, strengthened our understanding of what works, and kept us focused on building a trauma informed, compassionate, and accountable system.

Finally, we thank the members of the public, community groups, and organisations who engaged with us as this strategy was developed. Your feedback has enriched our understanding of local needs, highlighted strengths within our communities, and helped ensure this strategy reflects the values and expectations of Bedford Borough.

Together, through partnership, evidence, and the voices of survivors, we present a strategy that aims not only to address immediate needs but to prevent abuse, disrupt those who cause harm, and build long term pathways to recovery

Our shared ambition is clear: a borough where everyone can live free from domestic abuse, supported by a system that listens, protects, and acts.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Walker".

**Councillor Jane Walker**  
**Cabinet Member for Valuing Families: Children's Services**

## What is Domestic Abuse?

The behaviour of one person towards another person is “domestic abuse” if both people are aged over 16 years old and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- a. Physical or sexual abuse.
- b. Violent or threatening behaviour.
- c. Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- d. Economic abuse.
- e. Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

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

## Domestic Abuse Behaviours

Domestic abuse doesn't always mean physical violence, it could be:

- a. Being forced into doing something sexually that you don't want to do by a partner or ex-partner.
- b. Use of weapons, damage to property, physical abuse to children and animals. Threats to harm the non-abusive person, children, animals. Threats to portray the non-abusive person in a bad light to others and removal of children.
- c. Isolating an individual from others. Controlling what they wear, who they see, where they can go. Coercive control is now an offence under Part 5, S76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.
- d. Preventing a person from acquiring money in their own right, restricting how a person uses their money or resources. Making a person pay all the bills, taking out loans in their name. Controlling all the household money.
- e. Name-calling, being constantly criticised, stalking.

## What does Personally Connected Mean?

- Intimate partners.
- Ex-partners.
- Family members.
- Individuals who share parental responsibility for a child.

There is no requirement for the individuals to live in the same household.

So this could include:

- Those who are in a same sex relationship of any kind.
- A child over 16 who is abusing a parent or parents.
- A family member who is a carer for a relative.
- Family members who are forcing a child into marrying someone they don't want to marry (forced marriage).
- Family members who “punish” another family member for purportedly bringing shame to the family by behaving in a way that they deem inappropriate for their culture (so called Honour Based Abuse).

The devastating impact of domestic abuse on those who experience it can be long lasting from the physical injuries received and the trauma of the abuse. It can affect the individual's financial, employment and accommodation status and some people sadly never recover.

Children who live in homes where domestic abuse is happening are also greatly impacted in terms of their health, wellbeing and development. Under the Domestic Abuse Act, Children are now seen as victims in their own right. This is not just the children who actually witness the domestic abuse, it is all children living in the house who may hear the arguments, items being smashed and see the injuries or damage to the house the next day.

Some children are also verbally or physically abused too and may try to intervene and get hurt. Other children come to accept the behaviour as normal and behave in a similar way towards the non-abusive adult or grow up to be abusive in their own relationships.

## Vision

Everyone who lives, works, or studies in our area can live free from domestic abuse. Survivors which include children, access the right help at the right time; perpetrators are held to account and supported to change; and our system prevents harm, reduces repeat victimisation, and saves lives.

Effective partnership working is fundamental to delivering our vision.

This strategy is underpinned by a Coordinated Community Response, bringing together professionals across health, criminal justice, housing, education, safeguarding, social care, and the voluntary sector.

Crucially, it also involves partnering with survivors to ensure services are shaped by lived experience.



## Legal and Policy Context





We will meet our **statutory duty** under **Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021** to assess need and commission support in **safe accommodation**, having regard to statutory guidance<sup>1</sup>

### Domestic Abuse Commissioner Expectations:

The **Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC)** has set clear expectations: **transform the criminal justice response** (Shifting the Scales, 2025); **treat babies, children and young people as victims in their own right** (2025); and **strengthen learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews**. We align with these directions<sup>3</sup>.

Nationally, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) redeveloped measure estimates

**8.0%** of people 16+ experienced **domestic abuse** in the year to March 2024 (3.9m)

 **9.5%** women and **6.5%** men; 

a high and hidden burden that demands sustained local action<sup>2</sup>

1. Legislation.gov.uk <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/4?utm>

2. Office for National Statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/redevelopmentofdomesticabusestatistics/researchupdatemay2025>

3. Domestic Abuse Commissioner: [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/dac\\_cjs-report\\_main\\_FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/dac_cjs-report_main_FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf)

## Our Local Picture (Headline Needs)

### *Demand Rising and Complex:*

Frontline services report increasing **complexity** and **volume**, alongside “**system fragmentation**” themes from partners

### *Housing Pressure:*

Domestic abuse is a **significant driver of homelessness presentations**; the service highlights sustained demand for refuge and move-on with constraints in local stock



### *Police Outcomes and Repeat Victimization:*

**62–64%** of victims disengage/withdraw, and **repeat victimisation** is a persistent feature requiring earlier, coordinated intervention



### *Temporary Accommodation*

A notable number of households are in Temporary Accommodation (TA) due to domestic abuse, underscoring the need for **safer, faster move-on pathways** and **targeted prevention**

### *Partnership Strengths:*

Committed multi-agency partnership work with the **Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP)**, focus on survivor safety through the **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)**, the embedding of the **Safe & Together model** with Respect and the ongoing work to attain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation across housing

## Strategic Priorities

### Priority 1 – Prevention: Reduce Harm and Intervene Earlier

This priority is about reducing the likelihood of domestic abuse occurring in the first place by addressing risks early, challenging harmful behaviours, and strengthening safe, healthy relationship norms.

It focuses on early identification, increased community understanding, and timely, proportionate support.

By intervening sooner and creating safer environments, we can disrupt escalation and help prevent harm before it develops.

#### What we will do

##### Prevention & Education

Support educational, youth, community and religious establishments to embed age-appropriate healthy relationship programmes across settings, aligned with DAC calls for earlier education and child-focused support and the Gov VAWG strategy & action plan (pg8) : *“To ensure that every child and young person understands consent and healthy relationships and is supported in schools, education, and the community”*.

#### What does success look like

##### More Places Teaching About Healthy Relationships

Children and young people can access age appropriate relationship education in more schools, youth groups, and community and religious settings.

##### Confident, Well Trained Staff

Adults who work with children feel confident talking about healthy relationships, respect, consent and where to get help.

##### Children and Young People Know How To Stay Safe

Young people have a better understanding of what a healthy relationship looks like, how to recognise early warning signs, and who they can talk to if they’re worried.

##### Earlier Support When Something Isn’t Right

Concerns about unhealthy or unsafe relationships are spotted earlier, so children and young people get support sooner.

##### Stronger Community Partnerships

Schools, youth groups, community organisations and specialist domestic abuse services work more closely together to support children and families.

##### Inclusive and Accessible Learning

Healthy relationship programmes are designed with all children in mind, including those with additional needs or from diverse backgrounds.

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>Prevention &amp; Education</b> <i>continued</i></p>	<p><b>Children and Young People Shape What We Do</b> Young people help guide and improve the programmes through sharing their ideas and experiences.</p> <p><b>Positive, Respectful Culture</b> Settings promote kindness, respect and equality, helping to create safer, more supportive environments for all children and young people.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Abuse Early Identification</b> A commitment across all partners – statutory and voluntary sector in Bedford Borough who work with our residents to implement routine enquiry into practice in as standard.</p>	<p><b>A Shared Commitment Across All Services</b> All partners — from health and social care to voluntary and community groups — sign a shared pledge to ask about domestic abuse safely and consistently.</p> <p><b>Staff Who Feel Confident and Supported</b> Frontline workers across many different services receive clear training and guidance, helping them feel confident to ask sensitive questions in a compassionate, trauma informed way.</p> <p><b>Earlier Help for People Who Need It</b> Routine enquiry leads to more people being asked about their safety, helping concerns to be spotted earlier and support offered sooner.</p> <p><b>Domestic Abuse Champions in Every Sector</b> A network of trained champions across organisations provides ongoing support, advice and good practice to keep routine enquiry strong and consistent.</p> <p><b>Better Experiences for Residents</b> People in Bedford Borough receive a more joined up, understanding, and supportive response wherever they go for help.</p> <p><b>A More Open and Supportive Culture</b> Routine enquiry becomes a natural part of providing care and support, helping reduce stigma and making it easier for people to talk about their experiences.</p>

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>CAPVA (Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse) Early Response Pathway</b> Support and promote the implementation of the Bedfordshire CAPVA toolkit, ensuring the partners in Bedford borough are aware of toolkit which highlights the pathway for support for families experiencing CAPVA.</p>	<p><b>All Partners Know How to Help</b> Services across Bedford Borough, including schools, early help teams, youth services, health partners and voluntary organisations, understand what CAPVA is and how to respond safely, enabling earlier identification</p> <p><b>Widespread Awareness of the CAPVA Toolkit</b> Agencies know about the Bedfordshire CAPVA Toolkit and use it to guide conversations, decisions and support for families experiencing CAPVA. Staff are confident and equipped to provide support and signpost/refer families to the correct help.</p> <p><b>Clear and Consistent Pathways for Families</b> Families experience a smoother journey through support, with all partners using the same guidance, language and step by step response pathway.</p> <p><b>A Safer, More Supportive Community for Families</b> By embedding the toolkit and early response pathway, Bedford Borough becomes a place where families feel heard, supported and not alone in dealing with CAPVA.</p>
<p><b>Intervene Earlier with the Abusive Partner</b> Commitment to using the Safe and Together model<sup>4</sup> in Children’s Services to focus on the behaviour of the abusive partner, helping them engage with support that promotes lasting change, and working to keep the children safe and together with the non-abusive parent.</p>	<p><b>A Consistent Approach Across Children’s Services</b> Staff across Children’s Services use the Safe &amp; Together principles in their everyday work, helping ensure families receive a consistent and supportive response.</p> <p><b>Earlier and More Effective Support for Families</b> Professionals identify harmful behaviour sooner and engage the abusive partner early, helping reduce risk and avoid escalation.</p> <p><b>Support that Strengthens the Safer Parent</b> The non abusive parent is recognised for the protective actions they take, and support aims to keep them and their children safely together.</p> <p><b>Children Kept Safe within their Family wherever possible</b> Better assessments and planning help more children remain safely with their non abusive parent, reducing unnecessary family separation.</p>

4. The Safe & Together Model — Safe & Together Institute: <https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/the-safe-together-model>

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>Intervene Earlier with the Abusive Partner</b> <i>continued</i></p>	<p><b>Improved Confidence and Skills across the Workforce</b> Practitioners feel well equipped to have difficult conversations, understand patterns of behaviour, and respond in a trauma informed and child focused way.</p> <p><b>Clearer Accountability for the Abusive Partner</b> Professionals focus on the behaviour of the person causing harm, rather than placing pressure or blame on the non abusive parent.</p> <p><b>Stronger Partnership Working</b> Children’s Services and partner organisations share a common language and approach, making responses to domestic abuse more joined up and effective.</p> <p><b>Better Outcomes for Children and Families</b> Children experience improved safety, stability and wellbeing as families receive earlier, more coordinated support that directly addresses the source of harm.</p>
<p><b>Embed Survivor Voices</b> Continue to develop the survivor voice work ensuring that survivor’s lived experience informs strategic decision making and helps shape prevention and early intervention work.</p>	<p><b>Survivors Help Shape Decisions</b> People with lived experience influence strategic priorities, policies, and service improvements.</p> <p><b>Safe and Supportive Opportunities to Be Heard</b> Survivors can share their experiences in ways that are respectful, trauma informed and empowering.</p> <p><b>Diverse Voices Are Included</b> We listen to survivors from a wide range of backgrounds to ensure our work reflects the needs of all communities.</p> <p><b>Services Improve Based on Real Experiences</b> Survivor feedback directly informs prevention work, early intervention programmes and the design of local support.</p> <p><b>Clear Evidence of Change</b> We show how survivor insights have shaped decisions, helping build trust and transparency across the system.</p>

## Priority 2 – Immediate Needs: Support and Respond to Individual Needs

This priority is about ensuring that anyone experiencing domestic abuse which includes children and young people, can access the right help quickly and safely.

It highlights the importance of person-centred, inclusive, and responsive support that meets individual needs and promotes safety and wellbeing.

### What we will do

#### Children & Young People

Commission child-focused IDVA and therapeutic support.

Work with children’s services to ensure they capture the voice of the child throughout their work with the family, embedding child status as victims in their own right.

### What does success look like

#### Children recognised as Victims in their Own Right

Children and young people are understood and treated as victims of domestic abuse, with access to specialist child focused IDVA and therapeutic support when they need it.

#### Children’s Voices Shape Support

Children’s views, feelings and experiences are actively listened to and used to guide decisions about their safety, wellbeing and the support they receive.

#### Timely, Joined Up and Trauma Informed Support

Schools, health services, social care and specialist domestic abuse organisations work together to provide coordinated, trauma informed support, giving children clear and consistent pathways to help.

#### Improved Safety, Stability and Recovery

Children experience reduced harm, greater emotional stability and stronger protective relationships, helping them recover and thrive.

#### Inclusive Support for All Children

Support is accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive, ensuring children and young people from every background can receive the help they need.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>What does success look like</b>
<p><b>Safe Accommodation Pathway</b> Expand refuge accommodation by increasing dispersed tenancies with support to accommodate multiple needs creating inclusive provision.</p> <p>Reduce the housing related barriers that prevent people from leaving abusive relationship. By working within the ethos of the Whole Housing Approach, we will aim to ensure that survivors have access to safe, secure and appropriate housing options that support their journey to safety and recovery. Our Strategy will focus on making housing systems more responsive, inclusive and trauma informed.</p>	<p><b>Safe, Inclusive Refuge and Housing Options</b> Survivors can access a range of safe accommodation options, including emergency refuge and dispersed supported tenancies, designed to meet diverse and multiple needs and ensure no one is turned away from safety.</p> <p><b>Fewer Housing Barriers for Survivors</b> Housing related obstacles that prevent people from leaving abusive relationships are reduced, creating a clearer and more responsive pathway to safety, stability and independence.</p> <p><b>Responsive, Inclusive and Trauma Informed Housing Services</b> Housing services across the borough deliver more consistent, trauma informed and survivor centred responses, making it easier for people to seek help, access safe accommodation and rebuild their lives.</p> <p><b>Progress towards DAHA Accreditation strengthens Safety and Quality</b> Our commitment to achieving and maintaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation drives continuous improvement, ensuring housing partners meet high national standards for safety, effectiveness and survivor focused practice.</p>
<p><b>Specialist Advocacy</b> Ensure victim/survivors are aware of and able to access a range of support services appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>Continue to fund colocated IDVAs within hospitals, adults and children’s social care and housing.</p>	<p><b>Survivors can access the Right Support at the Right Time</b> Victim/survivors are aware of the full range of support available and can easily access services that meet their individual needs, ensuring no one is left without help when they need it.</p> <p><b>Independent Advocacy across Agencies</b> Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) provide consistent support across hospitals, adults’ and children’s social care, and housing settings, ensuring survivors can access specialist help wherever they present.</p> <p><b>A Coordinated, Trauma Informed Response</b> Advocacy services work with health, social care, housing and specialist domestic abuse partners to ensure survivors receive joined up, trauma informed support without needing to repeat their story.</p> <p><b>Improved Safety, Confidence and Outcomes for Survivors</b> Specialist advocacy leads to better safety planning, stronger engagement with services and more stable recovery journeys, helping survivors feel heard, supported and empowered.</p>

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>Safe and Supportive Health Environments</b>                      Work with Health Partners to increase confidence in addressing (routine enquiry, risk assessing and referral) of DA across all health provisions.</p> <p>Increase DA information available across health settings</p> <p>The prevalence of Domestic Abuse related suicides is understood</p>	<p><b>Health Professionals Confidently Identify and Respond to Domestic Abuse</b>                      Staff across all health settings feel equipped to ask about domestic abuse, assess risk and make safe, appropriate referrals.</p> <p><b>Consistent, Trauma Informed Support in Every Health Environment</b>                      Survivors experience compassionate, safe and non judgemental responses wherever they access healthcare.</p> <p><b>Clear Information is Visible and Accessible Across Health Settings</b>                      Domestic abuse information and signposting are easy to find in hospitals, GP practices and community health services, helping survivors know where to turn for help.</p> <p><b>Improved Safety and Wellbeing for Survivors in Health Services</b>                      Earlier identification and stronger pathways lead to better outcomes, increased confidence in services and safer journeys for survivors.</p> <p><b>A Better Understanding of the Risk of Suicide as Result of Domestic Abuse</b>                      Health and specialist partners have clearer insight into the prevalence of suicide as a result of Domestic abuse, strengthening routine enquiry, early intervention, safety planning.</p>
<p><b>Economic Safety</b>                      Build awareness of the wide-reaching impact of economic abuse.</p>	<p><b>Better Awareness of Economic Abuse</b>                      Professionals and partners have a clearer understanding of economic abuse and its impact, leading to more consistent identification and earlier support.</p>
<p><b>Protected Characteristics and Intersectional Needs</b>                      Improve awareness across partners of how domestic abuse affects people with intersecting needs including (but not limited to) <b>global majority</b><sup>5</sup> and minoritised survivors, older people, LGBTQ+ survivors, disabled survivors, men, women and children &amp; young people.</p>	<p><b>Better Recognition of Diverse Needs</b>                      Partners understand how domestic abuse affects different groups, including (but not limited to) global majority and minoritised survivors, older people, LGBTQ+ survivors, disabled survivors, migrants and are confident responding to the additional barriers some survivors face, offering support that is respectful, culturally aware and trauma informed.</p>

5. Consistent with national guidance on appropriate language in domestic abuse work, we use survivor centred and inclusive terminology, including the term ‘global majority’ where relevant. GLOBAL MAJORITY - English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/global-majority>

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>What does success look like</b>
<p><b>Protected Characteristics and Intersectional Needs</b> <i>continued</i></p> <p>Strengthen referral pathways by working with specialist organisations who hold expertise in supporting groups with specific needs (e.g., LGBTQ+ services, disability support providers, by &amp; for providers, migrant and NRPf advisers).</p> <p>Ensure information is accessible by providing translated materials, Easy Read formats and culturally appropriate communication where needed.</p> <p>Embed culturally safe approaches in housing and support by working with providers to consider diverse needs when planning or delivering safe accommodation and advocacy.</p> <p>Increase visibility of support for all survivors, including (but not limited to) those from the global majority, men, older people, disabled survivors, LGBTQ+ and people in rural or isolated communities, through targeted outreach, awareness raising and clear signposting.</p>	<p><b>Clearer Routes into Specialist Support</b></p> <p>Frontline staff know where to signpost survivors and have stronger links with specialist organisations that support specific groups.</p> <p><b>Information that Everyone can Use</b></p> <p>Domestic abuse information is available in accessible formats and languages, helping more people understand how to get help safely.</p> <p><b>Housing and Support that Feel Safe and Appropriate</b></p> <p>Survivors experience accommodation and support services that consider cultural, identity based and accessibility needs.</p> <p><b>Stronger Insight into Under Represented Groups</b></p> <p>Feedback from global majority and minoritised communities helps shape improvements, making services more responsive to those who may otherwise be missed.</p>

### Priority 3 – Disrupt: Intervene with those who Cause Harm and Reduce Re-offending

This priority focuses on holding perpetrators accountable and preventing further abuse.

It underlines the need for effective intervention, information sharing, and coordinated responses to disrupt harmful behaviour and reduce repeat offending.

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>Safe Effective Behaviour Change</b> Work in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to ensure the continuation of the delivery of an accredited behaviour change perpetrator intervention which integrates parallel partner-safety support.</p>	<p><b>Consistent Access to Accredited Behaviour Change Interventions</b> Perpetrators who are suitable for intervention are able to access accredited behaviour change programmes, commissioned in partnership with the OPCC, with clear pathways in and out of the service.</p>
<p><b>Targeted Perpetrator Management</b> Continue to support and participate in the MDAP (Management of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators) panel and the BSIP (Bedfordshire Stalking intervention Panel) (police, probation, Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), children’s services) to manage highest-risk/highest-harm offenders and non-engaging perpetrators.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing Effective Management of High Risk, High-Harm Perpetrators</b> The MDAP and BSIP panels work consistently and collaboratively to monitor and manage the highest risk and non engaging perpetrators, leading to earlier identification of escalating risk, stronger safety planning, and improved protection for victims and children.</p>
<p><b>Disrupt Those That Harm</b> Support Bedfordshire Police’s agenda to increase Clare’s Law disclosures by identifying and requisition rights to know for victim/survivors who may be at risk of Domestic Abuse from their current partner.</p>	<p><b>Increased Use of Clare’s Law to Prevent Harm</b> Partners work effectively with Bedfordshire Police to identify potential risks and request Clare’s Law “Right to Know” disclosures, leading to more timely warnings for those at risk and stronger opportunities for early safety planning.</p>

## Priority 4 – Partnership: Work with Partners to Deliver a Skilled Trauma-informed Workforce and Survivor-centred Culture

This priority aims to build a consistent, compassionate, and coordinated response across all services.

It promotes a trauma-informed approach, ensuring professionals are equipped to respond effectively and that survivors' voices shape how services are designed and delivered.

What we will do	What does success look like
<p><b>Trauma Informed, Knowledge Driven Practice</b> Continue to work with our Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership colleagues to deliver training for frontline staff (housing, social care, health, schools): Inclusive trauma-informed practice, routine enquiry, safety planning, risk assessment, referral, coercive control, tech-facilitated abuse, older people, CAPVA, Non-Fatal Strangulation (NFS), children &amp; Young People, No recourse to Public Funds (NRFP)FGM, Forced Marriage Honour based abuse, and Suicide &amp; DA</p> <p>Ensure training remains up to date with national research, policies and strategies. We will share learning from local and national Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR's) in particular highlighting the link to DA and suicide.</p> <p>Work with survivors to ensure their voice and experiences help to shape the Domestic abuse landscape in Bedford.</p>	<p><b>A More Confident Workforce</b> Staff across housing, social care, health and education feel better equipped to recognise domestic abuse and respond safely and compassionately.</p> <p><b>Training that Stays Up To Date</b> Frontline teams receive training that reflects current risks, national learning and local insights, helping them understand issues such as coercive control, tech facilitated abuse and non fatal strangulation.</p> <p><b>Safer and More Consistent Responses</b> Routine enquiry, safety planning and referral processes become more consistent across services, giving survivors clearer and safer pathways to help.</p> <p><b>A Culture of Learning and Improvement</b> Partners share learning and insights from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews and continuously improve practice based on what is known to keep people safe.</p> <p><b>Survivor Voices at the Centre</b> Training and service development are shaped by the experiences of survivors, helping ensure the support offered reflects real life needs and challenges.</p>

## Priority 5 – Recovery: Embedding Long-term Recovery Pathways

This priority recognises that recovery from trauma and abuse is a non-linear long-term process.

It focuses on supporting survivors to rebuild their lives, achieve independence, and access ongoing help with housing, health, and wellbeing in a sustainable and empowering way.

What we will do	How will this be measured
<p><b>Strengthening Long Term Recovery Support</b> Work with providers to ensure that services can provide support advice and guidance and signposting that helps survivors rebuild their lives after crisis recognising that trauma continues for years after the abuse has ended and survivors need stabilisation, safety and security before therapeutic support can be accessed.</p> <p>Type of support including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial independence support (e.g. benefits, employment, education).</li> <li>• Immigration and legal advocacy.</li> <li>• Ongoing mental health care tailored to recovery stages.</li> <li>• Wellbeing support – confidence and skills building.</li> <li>• Social connection, community and belonging.</li> <li>• Recognising the experts – amplifying survivor voice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clear, Accessible Pathways into Long Term Recovery Support</b> Survivors can easily access financial independence support, legal and immigration advocacy, mental health care, wellbeing programmes and community based support that meets their needs.</p> <p><b>Improved Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience</b> Survivors receive mental health support aligned to their recovery stage, helping them regain confidence, rebuild skills, and develop long term coping strategies.</p> <p><b>Reduced Isolation and Stronger Community Connection</b> People feel part of a supportive community, with opportunities for social connection, belonging and peer support that enhance recovery.</p> <p><b>Greater Independence and Future Stability</b> Survivors build financial security through improved access to benefits, employment, education, and practical advice that supports long term independence.</p> <p><b>Services Shaped by those with Lived Experience</b> Survivors’ expertise meaningfully influences service design, commissioning and improvement, ensuring recovery pathways reflect real needs and challenges.</p>

## **Governance**

The strategy and its actions will be developed and monitored by the Bedford Borough Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and be reported on to Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Children's & Adult Safeguarding Boards, Health & Wellbeing Board, and Community Safety Partnership Safer Thematic Partnership Board.

## Glossary of Terms

### **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)**

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) is a national initiative that sets standards and provides accreditation to ensure housing providers deliver safe, effective, and consistent responses to domestic abuse.

### **Safe & Together Model**

The Safe & Together Model a perpetrator-pattern-based, child-centred framework that partners with the non-abusive parent and intervenes with the perpetrator to keep children safe and together with their protective parent, while promoting accountability and reducing harm.

### **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

A Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a regular meeting where agencies share information and create a coordinated safety plan for high-risk domestic abuse victims.

### **Management of Domestic Abuse Perpetrator (MDAP)**

Led by Bedfordshire Police, this is a multi-agency panel that seeks to oversee and mitigate the risk posed by high harm high risk domestic abuse perpetrators.

### **Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP)**

Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) is a multi-agency collaboration that brings together local services and organisations to coordinate efforts in preventing domestic abuse, supporting survivors, and holding perpetrators accountable.

### **Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)**

An Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) is a specialist professional who supports victim / survivors of domestic abuse by providing safety planning, advocacy, and coordinated support across criminal justice and safeguarding systems.

### **Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA)**

Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) is a specialist professional who provides confidential, trauma-informed support and advocacy to victims and survivors of sexual violence, helping them navigate the criminal justice process and access wider support services.

### **Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC)**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) is an independent public office holder who provides national leadership, oversight, and advocacy to improve the prevention of domestic abuse and the protection and support of victims and survivors.

### **Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA)**

Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) describes repeated harmful or abusive behaviour by a child or young person aged 8–18 towards a parent or adult carer, including physical, emotional, economic, sexual or coercive control.

## Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us, please write to via the email address below

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