

**BIRMINGHAM**

# Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023

Changing Attitudes Changing lives



Making a positive difference everyday to people's lives



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# Foreword

Welcome to the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023. Domestic abuse is a serious issue, both nationally and here in Birmingham. It has a drastic, negative and long lasting impact upon the safety, health and wider life chances of women, children, and families; and drives wider crises such as homelessness and financial exclusion.

Tackling domestic abuse must become everyone's business. The way we respond to domestic abuse as a city is a reflection of our values. We are making a commitment to becoming a trauma informed city; leading the way in tackling domestic abuse, the fear it creates and the harm it causes.

As partners, together we are sending a clear message that:

- We will not tolerate domestic abuse;
- We will take robust, appropriate action against abusers;
- We will make the significant culture change required to influence the behaviours of organisations and future generations.

In doing so, we will ensure that women, their children and families are liberated from fear, insecurity and harm, and can lead the safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives that they deserve.

**Councillor Paulette Hamilton**  
Chair of Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board  
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

**Domestic violence is a crime. We are committed to preventing domestic abuse, improving the support and protection for victims and their children, and bringing domestic abusers to justice.**

Together with the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board, we will hold joint responsibility for the successful delivery of the strategy; With this work being actively driven by the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group, I am confident we will succeed. Collectively driving action against domestic abuse at this level demonstrates the strength of commitment Birmingham has made to tackling domestic abuse in our city, reflecting;

- The complex nature of domestic abuse and the associated harm and inequalities it creates including mental and physical ill health, homelessness and unemployment;
- The multi-layered and co-ordinated health, social and criminal justice approaches required to tackle this issue;
- The multi-agency input, investment and response required to achieve this.

I believe our strong partnerships, collective efforts and expertise will make a significant difference to help individuals, families and communities feel safe; and live lives free from the threat of harm that domestic abuse creates.

**Steve Harris**  
Chair of Birmingham Community Safety Police and Crime Board  
Operations Commander (Birmingham North) West Midlands Fire Service

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# Commitment Statement

**We warmly welcome the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-23 that sets the challenges and offers opportunities to deliver the aim of a safer city for women and children affected by domestic abuse.**

By providing clear direction to put women and children at the centre of our work and to recognise domestic abuse when confronted with it; to offer best practice responses; to challenge ourselves and each other in order to achieve positive outcomes, we can make it possible for women and children to live free from the fear of violence and abuse.

Multi-agency partnerships have at every level, across Birmingham, been key in developing this strategy. It is only by using those partnerships effectively that we can provide the leadership to make the necessary system and cultural changes that will make Birmingham a city free from domestic abuse.

**Councillor Tristan Chatfield**  
**Chair of Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group**  
**Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities**

And

**Maureen Connolly**  
**Deputy Chair of Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group**  
**Chief Executive - Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid**



**[birmingham.gov.uk](http://birmingham.gov.uk)**

## Introduction

**Domestic abuse touches the lives, directly or indirectly, of most people in Birmingham. The sheer scale of domestic abuse causes untold harm to individuals, children and families, communities and damages the social fabric of the city.**

This strategy adopts the Government definition of domestic abuse as:

*“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”.*

Birmingham has a strong history of partnership working in addressing domestic abuse. Despite this, there is now evidence that domestic abuse in the city, as elsewhere, is increasing and more people are known to be at risk than ever before. At the same time, our public services are shrinking and we need to find new ways to keep our population safe and healthy, and enable our communities to thrive.

We know a great deal about domestic abuse, not least that left unchecked, domestic abuse gets worse over time. As such, the case for identifying victims and intervening earlier to reduce harm is clear. However, our long-term ambition is for a city free from domestic abuse and we must therefore take all practicable steps to eliminate domestic abuse, reducing harm and demand for services along the way.

This will require everyone to expect equality and respect in their relationships; and every agency understanding the fundamental nature of coercive control within domestic abuse and responding effectively as a result.

## Scope of the Strategy

This strategy responds to:

- Adults (predominantly women), children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse,
- Children who are exposed to or witness domestic abuse at home,
- Those who are perpetrating domestic abuse.

It responds to domestic abuse in the context of:

- Abuse (predominantly) within intimate relationships, no matter how young or old,
- Abuse which continues after a relationship has formerly ended which is known to be a particularly dangerous time for women and their children, and a time when children are often used by a perpetrator to continue the abuse,
- Forced marriage, so-called ‘honour based violence’ and other forms of violence against women that are intrinsically linked to domestic abuse.

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# Ensuring Equality in Our Response to Domestic Abuse

**We know that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, from any background, in any relationship.**

The majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, or against other men that they are in a relationship with. Male violence accounts for the vast majority of serious harm and deaths through domestic abuse.

The national strategy Ending Violence against Women and Girls (2016) emphasises the importance of recognising the gendered nature of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is the systematic abuse of power and control, and is fundamentally linked to inequality. Inequality between men and women not only increases the opportunity for the abuse of power, it also makes it harder for women to live free from violence. It is clear that effectively responding to domestic abuse requires a response that takes account of broader gender inequalities.

This does not discount the responsibilities instilled by the Public Sector Duty (s149) of the Equalities Act 2010 to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups.

As such, this strategy also takes account of and responds to the needs of population groups sharing the following protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

To reflect this, here after, this strategy will use the language of women, children, and groups sharing protected characteristics.

# Defining and Understanding Domestic Abuse

## Defining Domestic Abuse

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**Controlling or coercive behaviour** was written into law under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and helps us to better understand the Government definition of domestic abuse (p5).

**Controlling behaviour** is behaviour that makes people sub-ordinate or dependent by isolating them from friends and family and other sources of support, taking control of their resources and depriving them of their independence.

**Coercive behaviour** includes acts of assault, threat, humiliation or intimidation that are used to harm, punish or frighten another person.

**Coercive control** is 'the micromanagement of everyday life. Micromanagement crushes the spirit even more fundamentally than the deprivation of basic necessities because it leaves little space for a person to breathe'. (Stark, 2007)

## Domestic Abuse and Legislation

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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.

## Understanding Domestic Abuse

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Coercive control lies at the heart of domestic abuse and all the aspects of the domestic abuse that become visible to others, need to be understood within this context.

As agencies, family or friends, we often don't know what lies beneath what we see, but evidence tells us it is likely to be there. Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews in Birmingham over the last five years tells us that:

- When we see physical harm, we need to understand the threat and fear that lies beneath and the fact that the victim will be trying to protect her children from these threats and harm at the same time,
- When we recognise a victim's isolation, we need to understand that she will be subjected to constant surveillance and monitoring of movements and activities,
- We need to understand domestic abuse, not as a series of individual and violent incidents, but as a relationship of coercion and control affecting everything that the victim and the family does. This has been described as an abuser's "micro-management of everyday life",

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- When we think a victim is unsure or indecisive, we need to understand the threats and manipulation that she may face combined with the assault on her self-confidence by constant undermining, put-downs and challenge to her self-worth,
- We need to stop blaming the victim but understand the safety strategies that are being used and respond to the threat and control which the victim and family faces,
- We need to rethink how we keep children safe. At the moment, we rely too heavily upon an abused mother to keep her children safe and think too little about how we, as agencies, can keep the family safe. We need to empower our staff to know that they can make a difference without the need to take a child into care,
- When child contact is granted, we need to understand that the abuser may be continuing to perpetrate abuse through the children by undermining the non-abusing parent, overwhelming their mother; monitoring and checking up on her or by actual threats to the children,
- When a victim has no access to money, we need to recognise the control that an abuser will likely have had over the family's finances and the debts that he may have incurred,
- We need to understand the threat that an abuser poses to those close to him. This is particularly true for mental health and substance misuse services who will often be working closely with an abuser and not want to jeopardise their relationship by enquiring too closely about domestic abuse,
- We need to stop domestic abusers from being invisible to our services and we need to control and manage them more effectively. Too often we are not tying up an abuser's history of violence with their current behaviour and then not being able to correctly identify the threat that the abuser poses,
- We need to understand that domestic abusers are most violent when their victim tries to end a violent relationship or seeks help. The majority of our domestic homicides (intimate partners) have been killed when they have sought help or tried to leave. If a victim is taking these brave steps, we must wrap protection around them.

# Domestic Abuse in Birmingham

- Birmingham is the largest local authority area in Europe and growing faster than the UK average. At the same time, domestic abuse is increasing in the city with an estimated 41,000 individuals experiencing domestic abuse, the vast majority of whom are women.<sup>i</sup>
- Birmingham is a young city where more than a quarter of the population are under 18 years of age. By the time they reach adulthood, more than 1 in 5 children in the city will have experienced domestic abuse at home.
- We recognise that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child's health, education and well-being. Locally, domestic abuse is a major factor for 77% of children needing Local Authority support, care or protection. This is significantly higher than the national average.<sup>ii</sup>
- Between 2013 and 2016, there was a 57% increase in reports of domestic abuse to West Midlands Police but only 19% increase in convictions of abusers through the criminal justice system.<sup>iii</sup>
- On average, Birmingham has seen a 20% annual increase in the number of referrals of women at high risk from domestic abuse to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences; from 473 high-risk victims in 2012 to 1,343 in April 2017.<sup>iv</sup>
- Last year domestic abuse was the second highest reason for homelessness in Birmingham. Whilst 90% of victims who applied as homeless were accepted for housing, only 32% of women and children seeking refuge in an emergency were able to gain refuge accommodation.
- Domestic abuse includes forced marriage, which is significantly under-reported and may be up to 35 times higher than reports currently suggest. The West Midlands is the second highest region, after London, for calls to the Forced Marriage Unit.
- Our population is living longer. A local primary care programme, has shown that family doctors are in a strong position to identify domestic abuse for women who are traditionally under-represented in services, such as older women and disabled women. Nearly 500 more women have been identified by GPs as a result.<sup>v</sup>
- Over the last five years, 21 women have been killed through domestic violence. Domestic homicide reviews in Birmingham have identified the need for a cultural change in the way that agencies safeguard women and children, and those with protected characteristics, from abuse and particularly call for a greater understanding of how coercive control affects families and how agencies need to respond.



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# Impact of Domestic Abuse

- Every child deserves the best start in life. Yet one in six pregnant women will experience domestic violence, and around 30% of domestic violence starts or worsens during pregnancy. Domestic abuse is a significant factor in the onset of pre-term labour, and maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity.<sup>1</sup>
- Growing up in an abusive environment and living in a constant state of control, abuse and terror can have profound consequences on a family's well-being, long into their future. The majority of victims and their children will live with their abuser between two and ten years.<sup>vi</sup>
- The impact of domestic abuse on the mental health of victims and their children is severe; dealing emotionally with the abuse and trauma they have experienced or witnessed often results in depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders. More than a third (36%) of women who have experienced severe physical and sexual violence have attempted suicide.<sup>vii</sup>
- Victims of domestic abuse, and their families, are often subjected to financial abuse. In a recent survey, 52% of women respondents who were still living with their abuser said they could not afford to leave because they had no money of their own.<sup>viii</sup>
- Victims of domestic abuse may have looked to alcohol or drugs in order to cope with the abuse that they were experiencing, or have been forced into dependency by their abusers. Women experiencing significant domestic abuse are more than twice as likely to have an alcohol problem and eight times more likely to be drug dependent than others.<sup>ix</sup>
- By virtue of their marginalisation in society, some groups, particularly those with protected characteristics, will face additional barriers to receiving the support that they need. As a result they will often face an escalating risk of harm.
- This impact of domestic abuse upon society, community and economy is rarely given due consideration despite the fact that domestic abuse fractures families, communities, workplaces and local economies. Public services such as the Police, Health, Housing and Children's Services are increasingly overwhelmed by responding to domestic abuse.
- Despite these increasing demands for services, domestic abuse still remains hidden. Without effective support and protection, women and children will be subjected to escalating abuse. On average, four women are killed by their abusers each year in Birmingham. The majority of these were trying to leave or end the relationship at the time.

<sup>1</sup> The British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology



# Our Vision

**Birmingham is a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse.**

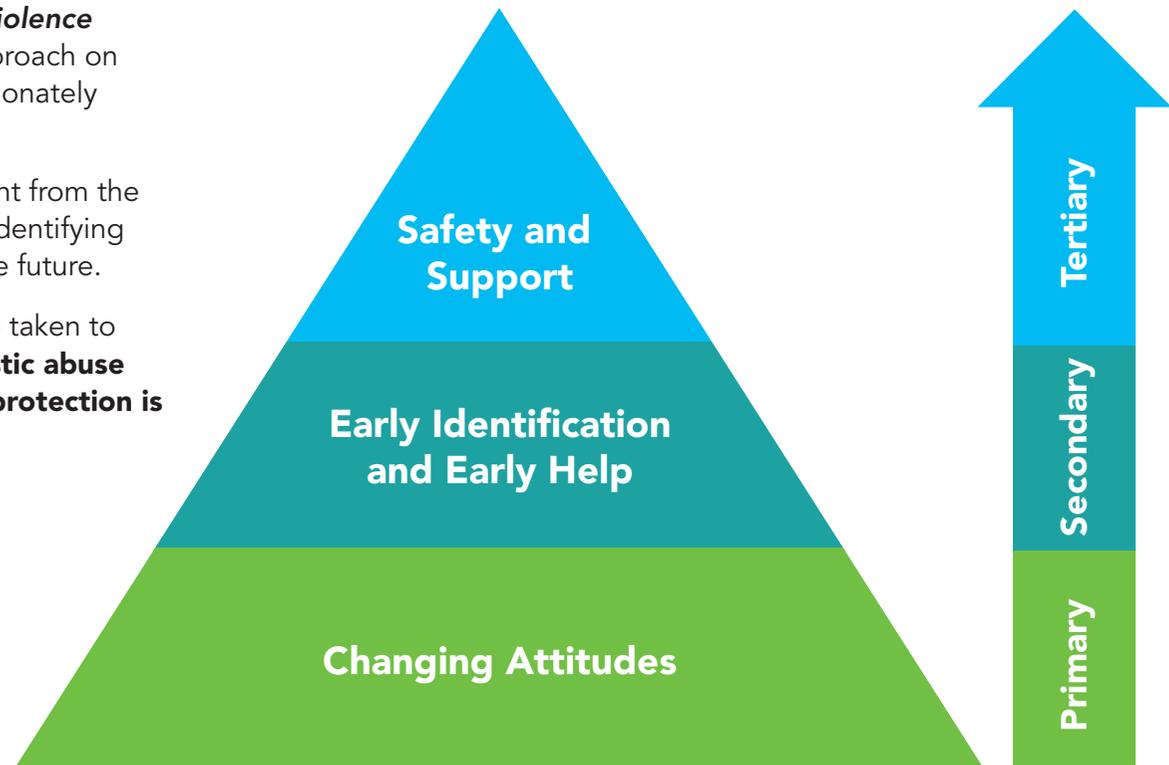
Our vision is rightly ambitious and cannot be achieved by a single agency in isolation. To be successful, **domestic abuse must become everyone's business.**

Our strategy sets out the city's commitment to tackling domestic abuse. Guided by the principles of the national strategy *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2016)*, we are focusing our approach on women and children – recognising that they are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse.

As a result, the starting point for our new strategy is different from the past as the focus shifts towards pro-active prevention and identifying domestic abuse as early as possible to limit its impact in the future.

To do this, a very careful and considered approach must be taken to rebalance our collective efforts towards **preventing domestic abuse happening in the first place whilst ensuring safety and protection is available where there remains a threat of risk or harm.**

**Our new strategy outlines a layered prevention model and focuses on three key priorities:**



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# Changing Attitudes

To be successful we must:

**Prevent domestic abuse by challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster it.**

## What do we mean by Changing Attitudes?

Changing attitudes in every sphere of public life starts with how organisations respond to domestic abuse. This is about driving the step change required to effect culture change and empowering practice across organisations through strategic leadership, operational management and supervision.

Changing attitudes means working with children from a young age to raise their awareness and educate them about equality and respect. In this way, young people's expectations can be raised about what to expect from their own friendships and relationships as they grow.

It also means that young people will be better equipped to reject images objectifying women via social media and deal with cyber bullying and abuse should they experience it. It is through education and equality that we can prevent domestic abuse for our next generation.

Changing attitudes means increasing public awareness so that those experiencing abuse will be better able to understand what they are experiencing and know that help is available.

Improving public understanding of domestic abuse will remove the excuses that abusers may have had to 'hide behind' what may have been socially acceptable to their families, friends and work colleagues as well as to the organisations that they came across.

We want to encourage major employers in the city to adopt a common approach to supporting employees who experience domestic abuse and introduce a common challenge to their employees who are abusers. This involves creating safe spaces for employees to disclose with confidence that they will be supported.

Successfully **Changing Attitudes** means an:



**Increase in healthy and positive relationships.**

**Decrease in social tolerance of domestic abuse.**

# Early Identification & Early Help

To be successful we must:

**Intervene early to prevent harm and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on victims and families.**

## What do we mean by Early Identification and Early Help?

Early identification and early help means strengthening our first responses in every organisation so that all workers are able to identify domestic abuse and intervene at the earliest opportunity.

It is about improving the effectiveness of domestic abuse support pathways and working with 'Trusted Professionals' to encourage people to share their experiences and identify abuse early.

We must strengthen our partnership arrangements – from strategic plans to frontline practice – so that we can identify and respond to domestic abuse as early as possible in an effective, co-ordinated way.

When domestic abuse is left unchecked and without intervention, the scale and severity of abuse increases. The earlier agencies can engage with women, children, and groups sharing protected characteristics, the more chance there is of reducing harm and ensuring families have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.

Doing this will ensure women, children and groups sharing protected characteristics, who are affected by domestic abuse, receive the help

they need to recover from their experience so that the impact is reduced in the long term.

Responding effectively to domestic abuse at the 'front door' in a large, diverse city like Birmingham requires a strong system behind the scenes. All agencies must know not only how to provide a first response themselves but also what to do next; knowing who to refer to and when.

Successful **early identification and early help** means that:

**Domestic abuse is identified earlier and victims are able to recover from abuse.**

**Escalation and harm from domestic abuse is reduced**

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# Safety and Support

To be successful we must:

**Ensure that victims of domestic abuse are protected from harm and supported to recover.**

## What do we mean by Safety and Support?

Effective safety and support means ensuring women who experience domestic abuse and their children are safe and protected from harm and have access to the right support at the right time.

It means ensuring the first response of front line agencies is consistent and includes recognising types of domestic abuse, identifying threat of risk or harm, and collecting robust evidence.

It is important that victims of abuse and their children are supported and protected, whilst action is taken against their abusers.

There continues to be too much reliance placed upon the non-abusive parent, overwhelmingly the mother, to keep themselves and their children safe. Abusive fathers often remain invisible in child protection proceedings even when they are the ones creating the risk. In this way, there has been insufficient focus on addressing the behaviour of domestic abusers.

To effectively provide safety and support, there must also be an increased focus on preventing abusers from harming others.

Recent changes in the law such as Coercive Control (s76 Serious Crime Act 2015) pave the way for our strengthened response to challenging and managing abusive behaviour through effective enforcement and deterrence.

Safety and Support means ensuring that we continue to put prevention first by ensuring a range of community assets and support networks are available for women and their children to access as part of their journey to recovering from domestic abuse.

Successful **Safety and Support** means:

**Increasing the number of victims and their children who feel they can live their lives in safety.**

**Reducing the risk of harm from domestic abusers.**

# Governance and Accountability

## Strategic Oversight

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Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership are jointly responsible for, and committed to, ensuring that Birmingham's vision for domestic abuse becomes reality.

## Strategic Assurance

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The Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board will seek assurance together, and through their respective governance structures, on the effectiveness of partnership working in the development and implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

## Monitoring Progress

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The Strategy Monitoring Team will report progress against the Joint Action Plan to the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group who will oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

The Citizens Panel will continue to have an active role in helping to monitor progress throughout the life of the strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership will undertake a joint review of progress against the Joint Action Plan on an annual basis up to and including 2023.

## Equality Duty

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The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

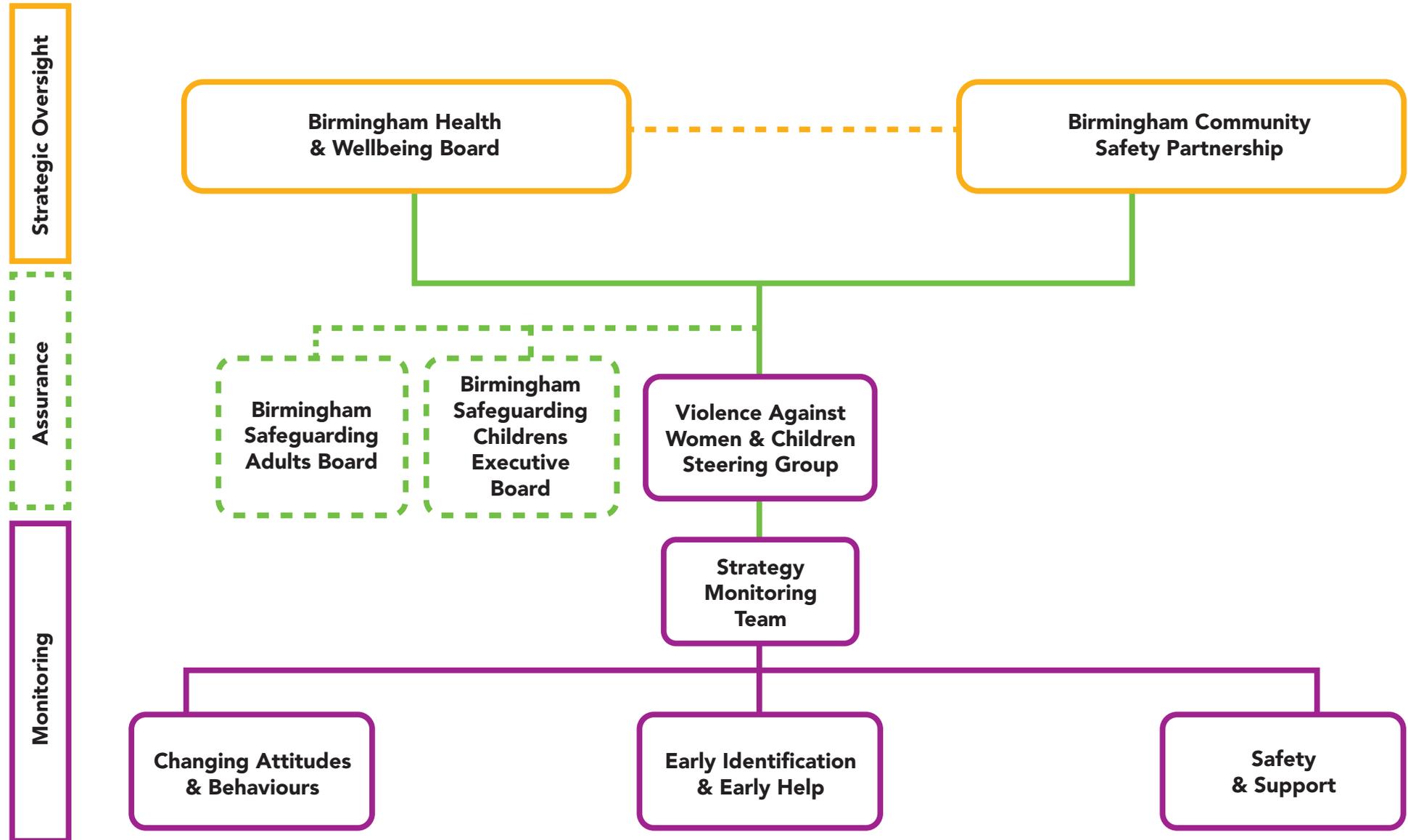
As such, our approach has and will continue to be informed by the latest available intelligence when determining key actions associated with the delivery of our strategy vision.



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## Governance

The strategy will be monitored through the following governance structure:



# Joint Action Plan

## Delivering the vision

Our Joint Action Plan is set in the context of the following essential principles:

- There is a strategic, system wide approach to responding to domestic abuse and preventing it in the future;
- Women, children, and groups sharing protected characteristics, who experience domestic abuse are at the centre of any action or intervention;

- There is a clear focus on abusers in order to keep victims safe;
- Communities are involved, engaged and empowered to seek, design and deliver solutions to domestic abuse.

The vision is ambitious and to be successful, significant system and organisational culture change is required. The following action plan sets the strategic direction for the next five years. The actions have been split into whole system and priority specific actions; the detail of which will continue to develop over a period of time.

## Whole Systems Actions

Whole Systems Actions	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
<p>Transform Birmingham’s approach to domestic abuse and coercive control in line with the findings from DHRs through the design and implementation of a trauma informed Birmingham workforce development strategy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertakes a domestic abuse training needs analysis for all organisations and delivers both multi-agency and service specific training,</li> <li>• Draws on the expertise of the specialist domestic abuse sector,</li> <li>• Designs best practice guidelines and toolkits to support mainstream workers,</li> <li>• Delivers against the learning from domestic homicide reviews,</li> <li>• Enables staff to work with domestic abuse to understand the multiplicity of need and respond effectively to prevention, early identification, early intervention and the safety and support needs of women and children according to their function.</li> </ul>		

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Whole Systems Actions	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
<p>Ensure the quality of domestic abuse service provision through the design and implementation of a quality assurance framework that incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of agencies against the new Kite Mark Accreditation informed by West Midlands Domestic Abuse Standards,</li> <li>• Specific analysis of domestic abuse through the Children’s Safeguarding workforce through Section 11 Safeguarding Audit,</li> <li>• Specific analysis of domestic abuse response across the Birmingham Workforce through the Adult Safeguarding Assurance process,</li> <li>• Quality assurance of Domestic Homicide Reviews and child safeguarding reviews where domestic abuse is a feature.</li> </ul>		
<p>Ensure strategic leads across the city work together to collaboratively shape and drive key priorities and actions across related strategy areas including Housing, Homelessness, Early Help, Financial Inclusion, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing, and LGBT to recognise, enable and ensure a robust response to domestic abuse.</p>		
<p>Strengthen evidence and intelligence gathering and sharing to inform policy, practice and priorities for future action. This includes ongoing collation of intelligence to better understand areas of underreporting in particular cohorts e.g. groups sharing protected characteristics.</p>		
<p>Develop and implement an integrated and multi-agency commissioning model in line with the Violence Against Women and Girls: National Statement of Expectations (2016). This should strike the balance between provision for safety and protection, as well as earlier intervention and recovery models for both adults and children.</p>		
<p>Recognise and build upon Birmingham based projects that are effective in their response to domestic abuse and are supported by a strong, locally developed, practice informed evidence base.</p>		
<p>Develop and implement a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Action Plan to monitor progress and hold the whole system and / or specific organisations to account in responding to recommendations made in DHRs.</p>		
<p>Work with strategic leads in Housing, Homelessness and Safeguarding Adult leads to drive improvement in Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and non-regulated accommodation provision through the development of quality standards and local markers.</p>		

Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority-Specific Actions:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
Changing Attitudes and Behaviours	Prevent domestic abuse by challenging the attitudes & behaviours that foster it.	Primary	Widen community engagement and public awareness of domestic abuse, including forced marriage and honour-based violence, by encouraging community-led preventative approaches.		
			Undertake targeted community engagement with groups currently underrepresented in services such as BME communities, LGBT communities, disabled and /or older women.		
			Explore potential of practices and programmes to raise awareness and develop young people's expectations of healthy and positive relationships.		
			Work with Birmingham Education Partnership and specialist services to agree a Birmingham-wide whole school approach to domestic abuse through strengthening equality and respect, and in line with statutory guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education - 2016).*		
			Refresh and roll out guidance to schools, colleges, universities and youth settings on dealing with domestic abuse, including the use of nationally available campaign materials and the local development of curriculum materials.		
			Develop and implement campaign and public awareness methods to effectively challenge attitudes to violence against women.		
			Develop and implement the Birmingham Domestic Abuse Prevention workplace standard in line with the West Midlands Combined Authority work on the Public Health England Workplace Wellbeing Charter and encourage Birmingham wide adoption of workplace policies on domestic abuse through Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.		
Early Identification & Early Help	Intervene early to prevent harm and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on victims and families.	Secondary	Strengthen the city-wide understanding of need by accessing and analysing available data, evidence, service standards and intelligence with input from victims and key partners including the City Council, Health, Criminal Justice, Education, Housing, Specialist and wider Third Sector.		

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Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority Action:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
			Establish early contact points and required actions in Primary Care and Emergency Care to improve the effectiveness for the identification of and response to domestic abuse.		
			In line with requirements set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, ensure that appropriate prevention and relief duties are in place for victims of domestic abuse. This includes information, advice, guidance, and support from the Voluntary Sector to prevent homelessness.		
			Establish a holistic, positive pathway and intervention hub for victims of domestic abuse that is capable of addressing multiple needs.		
			Stabilise and expand the general practice – based domestic abuse training, support and referral programme.		
			Define and effectively communicate ‘what works’ and ‘what is safe practice’ for ‘whole family’ approaches to domestic abuse.		
			Embed Birmingham’s current domestic abuse support pathways across all relevant services to improve and optimise effectiveness.		
			Expand current helpline provision.		
			Introduce early identification and early help pathways with ‘Trusted Professionals’ and across health and social care.		
			Evaluate the Child to Parent abuse pilot currently being undertaken in Birmingham Youth Offending Service with a view to extending the programme across wider services if effective.		
			Support initiatives to improve multi-agency responses to domestic abuse such as the Social, Emotional and Mental Health Pathfinder which seeks to transform education for children and young people with multiple needs, including domestic abuse.		
			Introduce an ‘Ask Me’ – type scheme where a person experiencing abuse can disclose in places they trust and where staff have been trained to provide an initial safe response.		

Priority:	Aim:	Prevention Level:	Priority Action:	Lead Partner/s	Date for Completion
Safety and Support	Ensure that those individuals experiencing domestic abuse are protected from harm and supported to recover.	Tertiary	Ensure there is access to refuge and effective community based support.		
			Strengthen the multi-agency response for those affected by domestic abuse including homeless prevention and health and wellbeing support – recognising that people cannot be kept safe without holistically addressing all of their needs.		
			Agree a common tool across agencies for assessing risk and threat from domestic abuse, following the review being undertaken by the College of Policing.		
			Ensure appropriate referrals across public protection processes and consistent multi agency attendance at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC), Domestic Violence Tasking, Child Protection and Integrated Offender Management meetings.		
			Guarantee a proportionate level of independent support for complex, high need victims of domestic abuse (e.g. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors).		
			Establish a clear pathway for Homeless Prevention and Home Options including civil interventions and home security measures.		
			Develop a multi-agency abuser management framework which involves management, diversion, disruption and wherever possible, prosecution of abusers with the aim of protection of women and children. This must be supplemented by effective wrap around support for the victims of domestic abuse.		
			Undertake a review of the Enforcement and Judicial System response to domestic abuse.		
			Assess and address local specialist provision for abusers in line with the RESPECT accreditation.		
			Develop and embed a service user led quality assurance approach to measuring victim satisfaction with the support they receive.		
			Ensure intelligence and learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews are used to inform frontline practice, policy and commissioning direction.		

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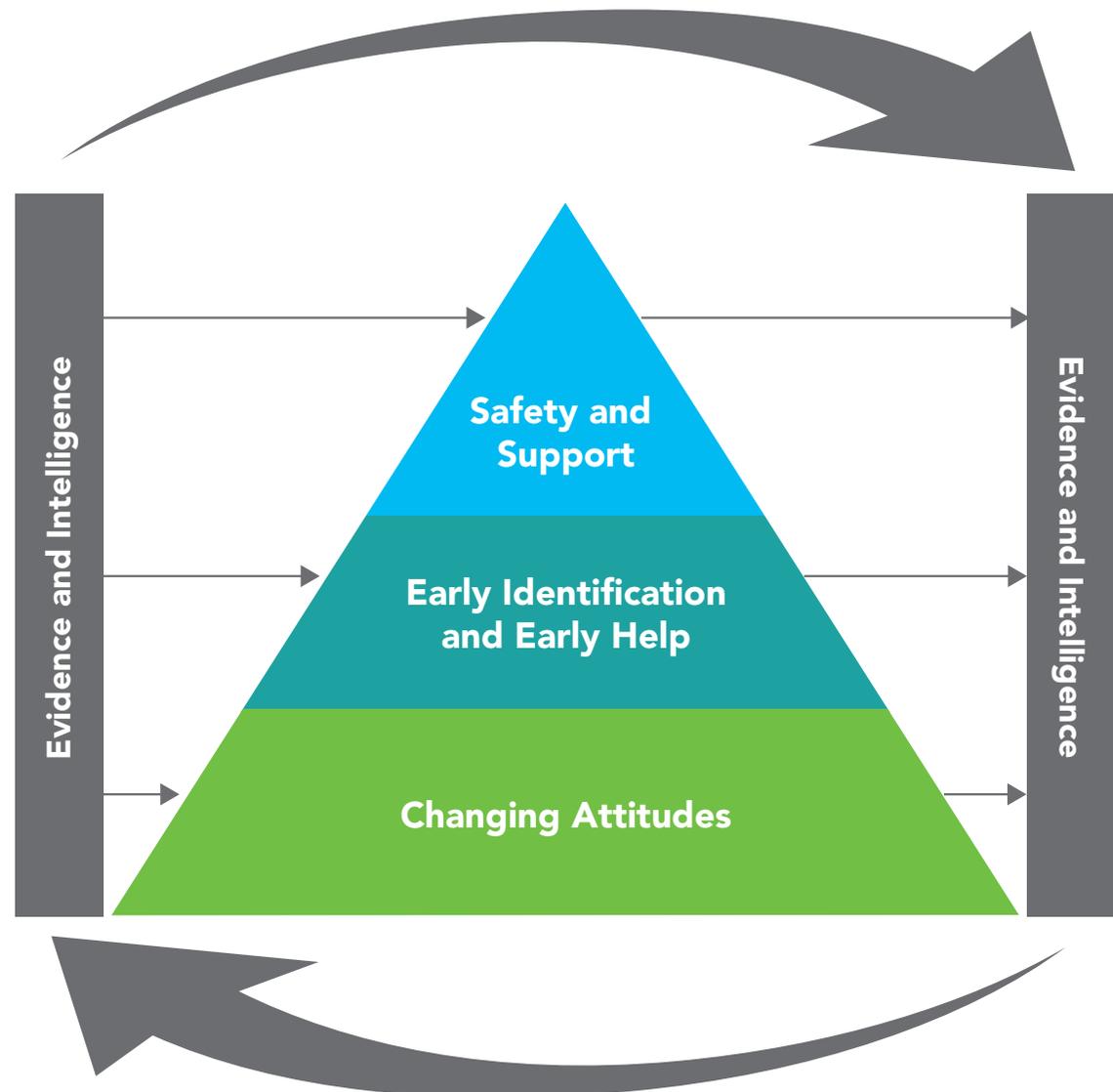
# Evidence and Intelligence

There is a clear evidence and intelligence theme which underpins the whole system actions along with all three priority areas within the joint action plan.

To inform and drive continued improvement and innovation in tackling domestic abuse throughout the strategy period, we must ensure that collectively we have access to, utilise and learn from the best available evidence base.

Birmingham is nationally recognised as a leader in the field of domestic abuse field and as such, we must ensure that the strength of local, practice-based evidence is recognised and considered alongside evidence based practice.

The following diagram demonstrates the flow of evidence and intelligence into and out of the strategy model:



# References

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- i Domestic Abuse Needs Analysis Update 2016
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