

# **The North Yorkshire & city of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023**

**Holding Statement amendment July 2022 to  
July 2023**

## **DA Strategy Update**

The vision of the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and City of York Council (CYC) Domestic Abuse Strategy in 2018 was to work with partner agencies across York and North Yorkshire to recognise the negative impact that Domestic Abuse has on families, children and communities, ensuring they are committed to providing effective and consistent support and interventions to meet the needs of those affected. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all partners and stakeholders for contributing to success of existing strategy and the work that has already progressed in meeting our objectives of supporting children and young people, as well as victims of domestic abuse, to improve their safety and support them in rebuilding their lives.

Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) NYCC and CYC are in a position to undertake an in depth joint needs assessment providing the authorities and our partners a plan and way forward to meet the needs of our victims and survivors, whilst enabling us to identify best practice to support both victims and perpetrators. It has been agreed by NYCC and CYC that the authorities will await the findings of the needs assessment to inform the development the future joint Domestic Abuse strategy. This is to ensure a robust and futureproofed strategy and action plan, which is fit for purpose for our population needs. As the strategy is developed we will be continue to work with our partners and stakeholders for both their input into the future strategy and to continue to build up on the successful work already undertaken since the publication of the current strategy. This includes progressing the commitments outlined within the published NYCC and CYC Safe Accommodation Strategy that are available on the Community Safety websites:

<https://www.nypartnerships.org.uk/nycsp>

<https://www.saferyorkpartnership.co.uk/>

## Foreword

### **Police Fire and Crime Commissioner**

Domestic abuse is a scourge on society. It is an issue affecting men, women and children, rural and urban communities, young and old. It cares not for gender, sexuality or race. It is indiscriminate. It is hidden.

Over the past few years we have made real progress in our collective response. This strategy is another step forward, and I am pleased that for the first time, we are now pooling resources and understanding across North Yorkshire and York to better protect and support victims and survivors, change perpetrators and comfort children. This strategy sets out how we will work together to make North Yorkshire and York a safer place, and sets clear objectives as to what we need to achieve. It is a strategy I am proud to have been a part of, proud to fund and believe it will make a real difference in communities across North Yorkshire and York.

*Julia Mulligan, Police Fire and Crime Commissioner*

### **Safer York Partnership & North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership**

Strategic Governance for Domestic Abuse is shared between Safer York Partnership and the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership. Domestic Abuse is a strategic Priority within both Community Safety Strategies, working alongside the Safeguarding Adults and Childrens' Boards to ensure that there is provision to support victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse across both City of York and the county of North Yorkshire. As Chairs of the partnerships we welcome the refreshed Domestic Abuse Strategy and the new programme of jointly commissioned services which will support the delivery of the strategy. Both partnerships commit to a joint approach to tackling

Domestic Abuse across both City of York and the county of North Yorkshire and with our partners we will ensure that the strategy is reflected in operational delivery models.

*Justin Ives*

*North Yorkshire CSP*

*Stuart Simpson*

*Safer York Partnership*

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategy outlines North Yorkshire & York's commitment to supporting all those affected by domestic abuse.

### Definition

#### Definition of “domestic abuse”

This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- (b) 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 (see subsection (4));
- (e) Psychological, emotional or other abuse;

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

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to—

- (a) Acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- (b) Obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).

References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

## **2. Definition of “personally connected”**

For the purposes of this Act, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies—

- (a) They are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) They are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) They are relatives.

For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if—

- (a) The person is a parent of the child, or
- (b) The person has parental responsibility for the child.

(3) In this section—

- “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
- “civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

- “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

## **Children as victims of domestic abuse**

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—

- (a) Sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- (b) Is related to A or B.

(3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if—

- (a) The person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
- (b) The child and the person are relatives.

(4) In this section—

- “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
- “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

## **Statutory Obligations**

Tackling domestic abuse is a Government priority and as such features within a number of key pieces of legislation. As national funding streams are often aligned to statutory obligations, it is important to ensure that this strategy is aligned to delivery of those obligations.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that employers adopt an effective workplace domestic abuse policy to demonstrate commitment to supporting victims and taking action against perpetrators.

Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which came into force in January 2005, extended the legal definition of harming children in the Children Act 1989 to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others, especially in the home.

The Care Act 2014 and its accompanying guidance outlines that the aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Stop abuse and neglect wherever possible
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them to make choices and have control
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life
- Raising public awareness so that communities can challenge abuse
- Provide information so that people can understand different types of abuse.

## **Violence Against Women and Girls**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) are serious crimes. These crimes have a huge impact on our economy, health services and the criminal justice system. Protecting women and girls from violence and supporting victims, remains a priority for this government. The VAWG strategy was published March 2016, a cross government strategy, with an ambitious vision for tackling abuse in all of its forms.



# The 2022-2024 VAWG Multi Agency Strategy for North Yorkshire and City of York

[Link to strategy](#)

## **Stalking and Harassment**

In carrying out analysis of domestic abuse cases, Stalking and harassment has emerged as a common theme. Stalking is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. Some examples of stalking are:

- Regularly giving unwanted gifts
- Making unwanted communication
- Damaging property
- Repeatedly following you or spying on you
- Threats

Taken in isolation, some of the behaviours may seem like small acts, but together they make up a consistent pattern of behaviour that is frightening and upsetting. The 2012 Stalking and Harassment Act recognises stalking as harassment that may include persistent and repeated contact or attempts to contact a victim.

## **Statistics on stalking**

- A study on the relationship between stalking and homicide involving a female victim and male perpetrator, found that in 71% of cases the victim and perpetrator were in, or had previously had, an intimate relationship
- Data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows up to 700,000 women are stalked each year

- Victims do not tend to report to the police until the 100<sup>th</sup> Incident
- Statistics show that the majority of victims (80.4%) are female while the majority of perpetrators (70.5%) are male
- The Metropolitan Police Service found that 40% of the victims of domestic homicides had also been stalked

## Our Vision

In accordance with the Home Office definition this document sets out a vision for how domestic abuse should be addressed across York and North Yorkshire and will be underpinned by localised implementation plans for the county and city.

### Vision Statement

Partner agencies across York and North Yorkshire recognise the negative impact that Domestic Abuse has on families, children and communities, and are committed to providing effective and consistent support and interventions to meet the needs of those affected

Our vision supports the vision and priorities of the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 for York and North Yorkshire that “by 2021, North Yorkshire Police will be synonymous with exceptional service, in the round” to be achieved through:

- Caring about the Vulnerable
- Ambitious Collaboration
- Reinforcing Local Policing
- Enhancing the Customer Experience

## Key Principles

- Understanding the needs and expectations of adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse and using this knowledge to shape the objectives of this strategy
- Working in partnership in a planned and co-ordinated way that will drive activities and deliver real outcomes
- Communicating and educating our community on the causes and effects of domestic abuse

## Objectives

1. **To co-ordinate services committed to early intervention and prevention of domestic abuse for adults, children and young people.**
2. **To improve and deliver support to children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse.**
3. **To improve the safety of victims who experience domestic abuse and support them in rebuilding their lives.**
4. **To co-ordinate and deliver interventions for perpetrators to reduce reoffending**
5. **To work together to improve the equity and consistency of services with committed funding through effective partnership working**
6. **To empower those who wish to remain in a relationship with the values, attitudes and skills to remain safe**
7. **To engage with communities to raise awareness and build confidence to seek advice and support when required**
8. **To carry out annual review of cases to ensure that , patterns and trends are identified which are impacting on domestic abuse**

### 2.0 Domestic Abuse Governance and Delivery Structure

In 2021, the inception of the Domestic Abuse Act led to a subsequent independent scrutineer review undertaken in York. This review recommended that the North Yorkshire County Council and the City of York Council develop separate strategic governance arrangements for domestic abuse to fulfil their new responsibilities

as Tier 1 authorities within the Domestic Abuse act, replacing the existing joint Domestic Abuse Joint Coordination Group meeting.

- 2.1 In January 2022 City of York Council formed the York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board alongside the North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. Both strategic governance arrangements continue to feed into separate community safety partnerships and will be supported by joint operational groups shown here;

DA Commissioning Sub Group.

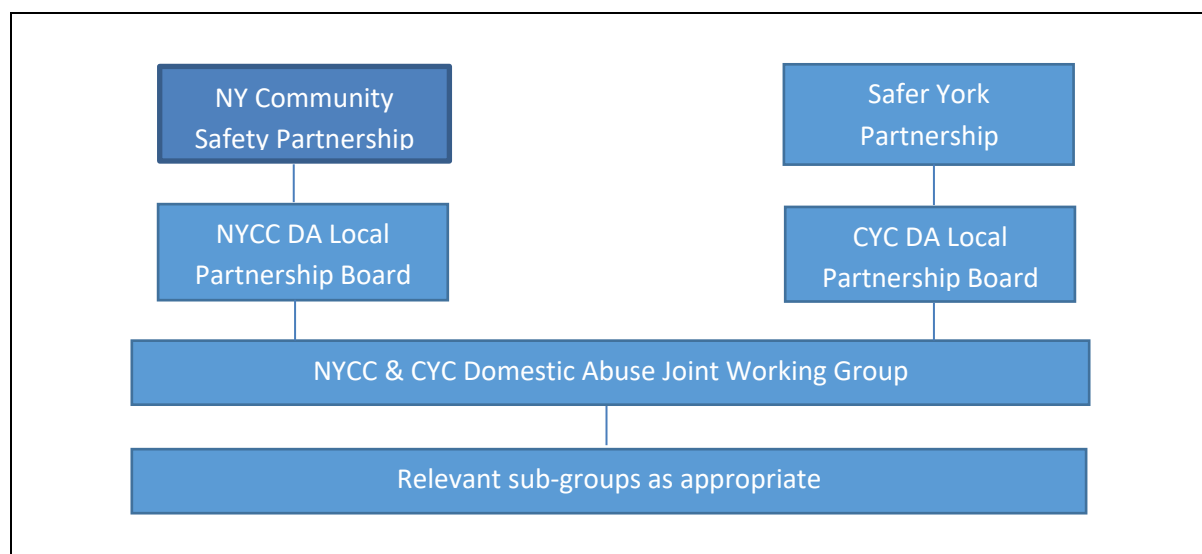
DA Tactical Group

MARAC/MATAC Steering Group

DA Safe Accommodation Working Group

### **Domestic Abuse Governance Structure**

- The flowchart provides an overview of our governance arrangements:



## 2.2 Partnership Communication

Through signing up to this strategy we are committed to communicating effectively not only with other agencies but also with members of the community. This includes:

- Delivering coordinated awareness raising with all members of the community
- Delivering targeted training to identified partner agencies
- Facilitating coordinated communication within and between partnership agencies
- Assessing awareness raising/training to ensure its effectiveness and appropriate service delivery.

## 3. Equality Statement

This strategy recognises that domestic abuse can affect people regardless of age; ethnicity; religion or belief; disability; sexual orientation; or gender. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the development of the strategy and determine the impact on the different groups.

The York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Joint Co-ordinating Group recognises that domestic abuse:

- Is predominantly *but not exclusively* the abuse of women by their male partner or ex-partner
- Causes significant harm to children in the household
- Also occurs between other family members
- Requires specific procedures and practices if it is to be tackled effectively

Whilst women are predominantly the victims of domestic abuse, it is important to note that domestic abuse can be also be perpetrated against men. Abuse can occur in any personal or family relationship including straight, gay and transgender relationships, with a number of published studies suggesting that domestic abuse occurs at a similar rate in both mixed and same sex relationships.

#### 4.0 **Key Achievements from The North Yorkshire & City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2014 – 2018**

- Establishment of clear Governance Arrangements through the Community Safety Partnerships
- Establishments of a single reporting mechanism across York & North Yorkshire Safeguarding Boards
- Audit of all commissioned services and design of a single commissioning process
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to underpin the commissioning process
- Establishment of an Operations Group to focus on improving service delivery

### 5. **Outcomes 2018-2022**

#### 5.1 **Objective 1 – Early intervention & Prevention**

This strategy recognises that early intervention through increased awareness is a priority in the prevention of domestic abuse.

##### **Outcomes**

- Increased confidence in reporting and understanding of domestic abuse across all agencies
- Increased understanding of healthy relationship and forms of domestic abuse amongst different agencies and the public

- Review of the domestic abuse training plan and development of a consistent programme of training across the sub-region
- Improved understanding of changes in legislation and processes linked to tackling domestic abuse
- Increased awareness and understanding of healthy relationships through educational settings

## 5.2 **Objective 2 – Children and Young People**

This strategy recognises that children and young people are affected by domestic abuse as: witnesses; experiencing abuse directly; and/or living within an abusive household. The strategy will ensure that we recognise the needs of and provide effective support for children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse and develop more preventative approaches through early interventions and awareness raising.

### **Outcomes**

- Delivery of effective community education to increase awareness and understanding of healthy relationships and domestic abuse
  - Increased awareness and understanding of the signs and impacts of domestic abuse and the support services available amongst staff working with children, young people and families
  - Improved understanding of 'Young People using abuse' to inform effective response and intervention
- Maintain the unique approach across North Yorkshire and City of York in relation to Domestic Abuse Notifications to Health Service (Midwifery)
- Expanded support services for young people who have experienced domestic abuse including those who may be at risk of becoming perpetrators
  - Continued development and delivery of Operation Encompass
  - Improve data and information in relation to the specific needs of children and young people and ensure that commissioning arrangements align to those needs

## 5.3 **Objective 3 – Victims**

This strategy recognises that adults of all ages (male and female) and children and young people can be affected by domestic abuse either directly or indirectly. The strategy will ensure that we take a victim focused approach, in order to increase confidence in

reporting domestic abuse and to protect victims from experiencing further harm.

### **Outcomes**

- Support for all victims to access specialist and non-specialist support services
- Improved local services and information to enable victims to remain in their own homes where safe and appropriate to do so
- Provision of safe supported accommodation for those who need to leave their homes
- Improved multi-agency responses to prevent and reduce domestic abuse, including the delivery of training and the Champions Scheme
- Development of opportunities to work with young people affected by domestic abuse
- Improvement understanding and responses to Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) and honour based violence
- Increased awareness and understanding of the signs and impacts of domestic abuse and the support services available amongst staff working with adults
- An improved response to and understanding of the domestic abuse of vulnerable adults, children and young people
- Retain the oversight of multi-agency practices such as MARAC and capture best practise
- To recognise that young perpetrators may also be victims of Domestic Abuse

## **5.4 Objective 4 – Perpetrators**

This strategy recognises that in addition to adult perpetrators of domestic abuse, young people may be identified as having or developing abusive behaviours.

### **Outcomes**

- Improve our understanding of patterns of abuse and recognising abusive behaviour, including same sex relationships
- Deliver and continue to develop the Making Safe Scheme
- Investigate and improve our knowledge of specialist programmes for working with female perpetrators
- Develop knowledge and guidance on working with serial perpetrators including the development of a local Multi-agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) process



- Improve service abilities to identify perpetrators
- Identify perpetrators not in the criminal justice system

## 5.5 **Objective 5 – Partnership Commitment**

This strategy recognises the need to continue to work in partnership between councils and other agencies to deliver joint commissioning and effective and co-ordinated services. The strategy will be refreshed annually to reflect legislative and policy changes as well as changes to the local delivery landscape. Additional funding streams will also be explored to enable the Joint Co-ordinating group to strive for continuous improvement in service delivery.

### **Outcomes**

- Deliver the York & North Yorkshire Joint Commissioning Plan
- Review and refine the Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process to mitigate further risk of harm
- Effective partnership working through development of a consistent approach to Strategic Boards and domestic abuse forums across the sub-region
- Effective multi-agency sharing of lessons learnt from local and national domestic homicide reviews
- Review the strategy annually
- Identify funding streams to support enhanced local delivery

## Couples Staying Together

## 5.6 **Objective 6 - To recognise those who wish to remain in a relationship with the values, attitudes and skills to enable them to be safe**

This strategy recognises that some individuals living in a relationship where domestic abuse is a factor may wish to remain in that relationship.

### **Outcomes**

- Develop relationships between the families and agencies to work together.

Provision of easily accessible information and safety plans for those wishing to stay together.

## Community Engagement

### 5.7 **Objective 7 - To engage with communities to raise awareness and build confidence to seek advice and support when required**

This strategy recognises the importance of understanding our communities and recognising where domestic abuse is more prevalent within specific communities.

#### **Outcomes**

- An understanding of the demographic makeup of our communities in particular minority and vulnerable groups.
- Effective programme of awareness raising addressing local needs with the public using a range of techniques i.e. social media, radio, educational workshops, etc.
- To increase underreporting in areas
- To engage with Schools and Young people to promote preventative work

### 5.8 **Objective 8 – To carry out annual review of cases to ensure that patterns and trends are identified which are impacting on domestic abuse**

#### **Outcomes**

- Targeted education and awareness campaigns which focus on identification of patterns that could prevent domestic abuse
- Local delivery of support services is focused on the factors which contribute to abusive behaviour

### 5.9 **The cost of domestic abuse**

In 2017/18 there were 8,812 reported incidents of domestic abuse reported to police in York and North Yorkshire. Based on Safe Lives' (formally CAADA) estimate that the average cost of reporting domestic abuse is £30,000 per victim, the cost of tackling domestic abuse in York and North Yorkshire is high.

This figure is based on the estimated cost to the Police and Health Services; however, it does not include further costs such as refuges and support workers. This figure also does not cover external costs such as missed days at work. Once these further costs are factored in, the actual cost of Domestic Abuse in North Yorkshire is much higher.

This strategy recognises the importance of preventative measures in reducing offending and reoffending to drive down the cost and impact of domestic abuse across North Yorkshire and York.

## 6.0 **Related Documents and Guidance**

For help & Sources of support.

Click on [Link](#)

### **Contact us**

Anita Dobson, Nurse Consultant in Public Health, City of York Council

Email: [enquiries.publichealth@york.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.publichealth@york.gov.uk)

Odette Robson, Head of Safer Communities North Yorkshire County Council

Tel: 01609 797105