

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy



2023 - 2028

**SAFER
CORNWALL**
Kernow Salwa



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The past three years have seen some of the most difficult times we have ever faced. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions imposed strict limits on daily life - for adults and children affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence the impacts were especially severe, and ongoing challenges remain.

Across the UK, victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence found their struggles intensified with government measures requiring people to stay at home with their partners and/or families to reduce the spread of Covid-19. In Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, we worked quickly to make sure that victims could still reach out for help, thinking creatively to ensure there were channels in place to contact and support individuals and their families.

Initially we saw a reduction in cases and we expected that as we came out of lockdown the number of victims coming forward would rise quickly, which they did. Specialist services were amazing in continuing to provide high-quality support throughout despite these challenging conditions, and this is a credit to their passion and determination to make a real difference in people's lives.

Our new strategy is more important and relevant than ever, reflecting what we have learned from the last few years - this is what victims, survivors, children and young people and those engaging in abusive behaviours have told us. We now need to turn that into truly positive action.

This new strategy brings together Safer Cornwall (Cornwall's Community Safety Partnership); Our Safeguarding Children's Partnership; Cornwall's Safeguarding Adults Board; and Cornwall's Health and Wellbeing Board. It is the first cross partnership DASV strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, bringing together the key organisations who play a role in making our county a place where domestic abuse and sexual abuse is not tolerated.



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Cllr Carol Mould
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Thalia Marrington

Cllr Thalia Marrington
Chair of cross-party working
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Four boards | One vision

This strategy is a call to action over the next five years: To end domestic abuse and sexual abuse/ violence in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It aims to embed a preventative approach focused on addressing the root causes of violence, as well as early identification and prevention, to ensure people are safely supported from crisis through to recovery.

Tackling domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence is everyone’s business and we know we can achieve real, sustainable progress by working together to prevent individuals from experiencing abuse and/or engaging in abusive behaviours. There has been considerable progress in Cornwall’s response since the previous strategy, launched in 2019, but there is still a long way to go.

Safer Cornwall

Safer Cornwall is the community safety partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, responsible for reducing crime and disorder; anti-social behaviour; problem use of drugs and alcohol; and re-offending.

Safeguarding Adults Board

The SAB is responsible for protecting adults in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly from abuse, reducing the risk of abuse, and supporting people to stop abuse where it happens.

Our Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (OSCP)

OSCP oversees how relevant organisations work together to promote, safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The core purpose of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to increase joint working across health and care organisations in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

This strategy brings together the four statutory boards in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly with responsibility for community safety, safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, and health and wellbeing and the associated organisations represented by these boards. Our shared vision and understanding for tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence underpin this strategy and its delivery plan, and all four boards are fully committed to its implementation. Safer Cornwall holds the statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for Domestic Homicide Reviews* and takes the lead on this approach.

We will continue to take a public health approach to further develop a shared understanding of local needs; to develop our strategic priorities; to inform and develop services; and to evaluate and review whether we are putting those who matter most and need help at the heart of what we do, enabling victims plus their families and children and those who engage in abusive behaviours to have their needs met effectively.

*More information on Domestic Homicide Reviews can be found on the Safer Cornwall webpage: <https://safercornwall.co.uk/domestic-homicide-reviews-dhrs/>



Simon Mould
Chair, Safer Cornwall



Fiona Field
Chair, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Adults Board



John Clements
Chair, Our Safeguarding Children Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



Cllr Linda Taylor
Chair, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Health and Wellbeing Boards

Our approach

Trigger & Content Warning

This Strategy contains case studies, statistics and examples of abusive behaviours which can be upsetting. In addition, domestic abuse can inflict lasting trauma, therefore some of us with lived experience may be triggered by the content. If you feel you would like support, please contact Safer Futures on 0300 777 4777 or visit their website <https://saferfutures.org.uk/>

This strategy is set within the wider context of the National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021; the National Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services; and the National Domestic Abuse Plan.

We recognise the gendered nature of violence against women and girls, whereby women and girls make up the majority of victims and experience the most severe and dangerous forms of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence; and the majority of individuals engaging in abusive behaviours are men and boys. Our strategy recognises that men and boys also experience abuse and violence and that every member of our community deserves to feel safe and free from abuse, violence and fear.

This strategy is underpinned by what people with lived experience of domestic abuse and sexual abuse have told us. Our priorities and delivery plan reflect this and were drafted from:

- Workshops, surveys, interviews and focus groups with a variety of professionals and survivors
- Case studies
- Data and information collected and consolidated in the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment 2021/22

- Co-production through the voices of victims with lived experience and who are experts in domestic abuse and sexual abuse
- National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021
- Community Safety Partnership Strategy
- Safer Cornwall Strategic Assessment
- Lessons learnt from Domestic Homicide Reviews and Child Serious Case reviews
- Scrutiny Report commissioned by the Our Safeguarding Children Partnership



What do we mean by domestic abuse and sexual violence?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 strengthens the support for victims of abuse and enables abusers to be brought to justice.

The Domestic Abuse Act created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been personally connected to each other.

The definition also recognises that domestic abuse can impact on a child who sees, hears and/or experiences the effects of the abuse and treats such children as victims in their own right where they are related to either the abuser or the abused.

The full definition can be found in Appendix 1.

Sexual abuse and/or violence

‘Sexual abuse’ and/or ‘sexual violence’ can both be defined as any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature that takes place without consent or without understanding.

It encompasses a broad range of activities, physical, visual and verbal, that are: of a sexual nature; take place without consent or without understanding; are experienced, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault; and that take away the ability to control intimate contact.

Whilst sexual violence has been recognised as a cause and a consequence of gender inequality disproportionately affecting women and girls, we recognise there are heterosexual male victims and victims within the LGBT+ community.’

This strategy responds to sexual assault and abuse in the context of adults and should be read in conjunction with the Childhood Sexual Abuse Strategy and Child Exploitation Strategy for Cornwall. A full description of sexual assault and abuse can be found in Appendix 1.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Other significant changes include:

- The creation of a new offence of non-fatal strangulation;
- Placing a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation;
- Extension of the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse;
- Extension of the ‘revenge porn’ offence to cover the threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress;
- Clarification of the law to further deter claims of “rough sex gone wrong” in cases involving death or serious injury;
- Prohibiting abusers from cross-examining their victims in person in family and civil courts in England and Wales;
- Establishing in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

Young people can experience domestic abuse in a multitude of ways:

- They can be victims of domestic abuse in the family home.
- They can experience domestic abuse in their own intimate partner relationships.
- They may demonstrate harmful behaviours themselves, towards partners or family members.

Young people experience the highest rates of domestic abuse of any age group but have one of the lowest reporting rates. Young people in teenage years are under-represented in all services, particularly amongst those seeking housing support

“ My son was crying to leave me alone, his dad was screaming back at him, once I got back up he started coming for me again, my son had picked up a bottle and was going to hit his dad to stop him but I just shook my head to say ‘no’. ”

It is estimated that one in four children in Cornwall live in households where an adult is or has been affected by domestic abuse.

Witnessing violence/abuse is one of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that research shows will go on to significantly impact on not only outcomes for children, but also longer term on the health, wellbeing and mortality of the wider population.

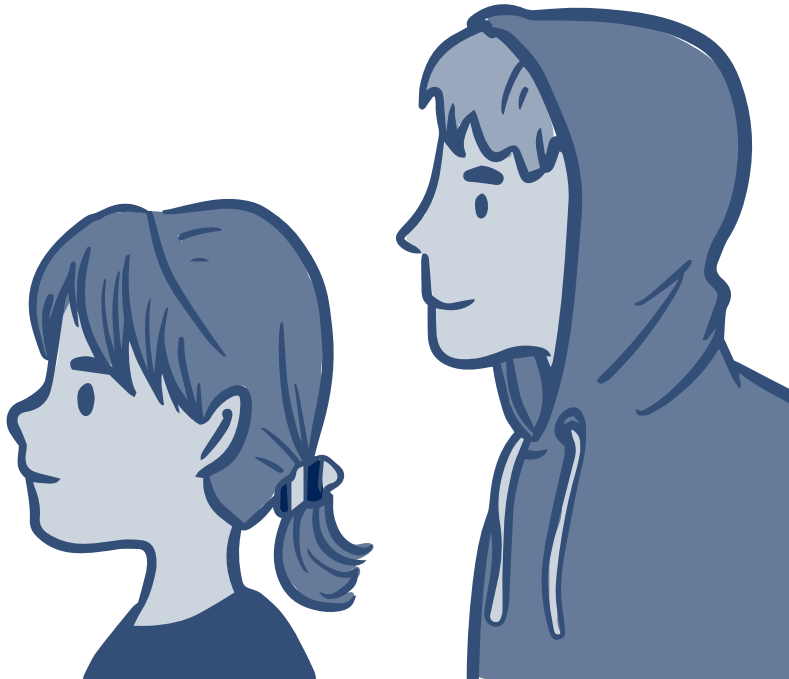
This is especially true for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, certain ethnic minorities or from families who are socially isolated¹.

1. Bryant et al (2020) The rise of adverse childhood experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For 6.2% of children (1 in 16) the abuse will have been experienced in the last year.

Impacts on children from direct abuse and from growing up in an abusive environment, seeing and hearing the abuse of others, can include emotional trauma, behavioural problems, mental health issues and risk-taking behaviour:

- Truancy
- Running away
- Substance use
- Alcohol use
- Eating disorders
- Sexual assaults
- Lower educational attainment
- Teen pregnancy
- Use of pornography
- Mental health problems, such as anxiety and/or depression.



In Cornwall...

21%

of all crimes recorded in the Devon and Cornwall police area relate to domestic abuse

An estimated 21,500 people have experienced domestic abuse in Cornwall in the last year

14,740 women **6,760 men**²

An estimated **1 in 4 children** in Cornwall live in households where an adult is or has been affected by domestic abuse.

Reports of **stalking** have **more than doubled** in 2020/21,, with

471 cases being reported with

81% of these linked to domestic abuse³

In the last year an estimated 1 in 50 people experienced sexual assault in Cornwall.

It is estimated that **7,300** people aged 16 years or over in Cornwall are victims of sexual assault each year

2% of the population⁴

14%



of people have experienced sexual assault after the age of 16

That equates to **56,900** people in Cornwall.

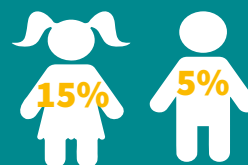
More than half of all sexual offences recorded by the police in England and Wales were offences against under-18's



A person with a **disability** is **more than twice as likely** to experience **domestic abuse** than a person with no disability

It is suggested that approximately **10,700 children** in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

have experienced or are experiencing some form of sexual abuse



In 2021/22 we received

10

Domestic Homicide referrals - eight progressed to DHRs



Only **5-10%**

of people are estimated to report sexual assault to the police

In Cornwall **491** rape offences were reported in 2022/21



Just under **5,000**

referrals to commissioned specialist DA services in 2021, an **increase of 47%** from the previous year.

There can be up to a **three year wait** for cases to come to court



In 2021/22 **1,230**

sexual offences were reported to the police in Cornwall



50% of all rape offences against people aged 16+ are recorded as domestic abuse

Estimated cost of DASV

Costs in Cornwall



£158.3 million estimated cost of domestic abuse



£40 million estimated in the last 12 months for domestic homicides

£80.8 million estimated costs of rape offences

£90 thousand for each childhood victim of **Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)** which equates to **£955 million** for Cornwall

⁶ Office for National Statistics, 2020. ⁷Radakin et al (2021), Home Office research. ⁸Radakin et al (2021), Home Office research. ⁹ Radakin et al (2021), Home Office research

We've been told

"Professionals need more confidence."

"More support for adults impacted by childhood sexual abuse."

"We need improved pathways for those leaving prison."

"I will be more confident asking questions when seeing clients." Training Attendee

"Interpreter provision across Cornwall is not fit for supporting those impacted by DASV."

"I want a lead helper to co-ordinate my care and help me sort the obstacles to my progress."

"I want everyone to share my information."

"A choice of support – what and when I need it."

"More support (is needed) for those engaging in abusive behaviours."

"Without the support of my DASA, I wouldn't have known it wasn't my fault, and (wouldn't have) had the knowledge and the strength to take it to the police."

"I want services to work with my partner, my family and me in a joined-up, co-ordinated approach."

"A trusted worker to stay with us throughout our journey."

"There is nothing teaching us about red flags and how to deal with the situation. Having posters and assemblies in schools – What about the prevention element?"

"Non specialist Emergency accommodation often does not feel safe or meet people's needs."

"Those who access specialist DASV services receive a great response."

"There are additional barriers to accessing support for those from marginalised groups."

"Stigma still exists."

"I get amazing emotional support and do not feel judged."

"Stop the blame culture. Don't treat victims like offenders."

"It's everybody's business."

Our priorities

Cornwall is a place where domestic abuse and sexual abuse is not tolerated; where everyone can expect equality and respect, and live free from fear.

1. Strengthening prevention and early identification

We aim to strengthen our approach to prevention to enable identification of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence at the earliest opportunity, intervene effectively, safely and prevent escalation. **We aim to break the potential cycle of abuse and trauma**, considering the needs of the whole family.

2. Increasing access and breaking down barriers

We aim to develop an inclusive and needs-led, coordinated community system accessible to all.

3. Behaviour change, justice and protection

We aim to **progress and extend gender informed prevention, support and interventions** to challenge and change abusive behaviour.

We aim to improve the Criminal Justice System (CJS) response to domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence by **providing trauma informed support for survivors**, and **holding those engaging in abusive behaviours to account**.

4. Greater support for victims and survivors

We aim to provide **gender informed support to those impacted by domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence** who are accessing, trying to access or unable to access specialist support.

5. Working together

We aim to **lead by example by working collaboratively** and through co-production to **simplify the system** for those who use it.



1. Strengthening prevention and early identification

We aim to strengthen our approach to prevention to enable identification of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence at the earliest opportunity, and to intervene effectively and safely to prevent escalation. We aim to break the potential cycle of abuse and trauma, considering the needs of the whole family.

In order to eradicate domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence, there is a need to develop a whole community response. This should strive to promote better knowledge and understanding of abuse, promote healthy relationships and empower members of the community to respond.

We need to increase public awareness and encourage people to feel safe and confident to report to the police and/or specialist services.

We want anyone affected by domestic abuse and/or sexual abuse/violence to know that it is ok to talk about it and where to access support.

Our aim is for local organisations and agencies to have effective ways to identify needs of individuals,

children and families experiencing domestic abuse and/or sexual abuse/violence. Professionals need to feel comfortable and confident asking about domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence, routinely, with a comprehensive knowledge of how to access safety and support and where to refer people.

We aim to work with children from a young age to educate them about equality and respect. Young people's expectations can be raised about what to expect from their own friendships and relationships as they grow.

Early recognition will lead to earlier interventions and reduce the impact of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence on individuals and their families.

Case Study

Lawrence witnessed physical violence towards his mother and was referred to the Safer Futures Family Programme due to Lawrence managing his anger the way that he has witnessed other adults in his life manage their anger.

Lawrence was quite shy to start with during the first couple of sessions. He would also say "I don't remember" quite a lot. By the end of the second session, Lawrence was smiling a lot more and started to speak and interact a bit more.

Lawrence has developed a good understanding of his own emotions and the physical effects this can have. He has also started to learn how to cope with his anger and is using the coping strategies we have put in place - glitter jar seems to be really effective for him.

What do we aim to do?

1. Increase public awareness of domestic abuse, including coercion and control; sexual abuse; **and healthy relationships.**

2. We will continue to **develop community responses to domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence**, including bystander interventions, safe spaces, and working with local businesses.

3. We will work with education establishments, early years, and 16-18 years provision to **develop whole, inclusive approaches to DASV.**

“ My worker from Safer Futures was the only person who believed me for what felt like a long time. ”

4. Work with our safeguarding teams to **support early identification of abuse of vulnerable adults** including those with learning disabilities and abuse affecting older victims and survivors.

5. Work with our partners to **promote safety where children are displaying harmful behaviours**, understanding that this behaviour is often rooted in trauma.

6. We will commit to **developing the workforce** in being able to **feel confident in identifying and responding to domestic and sexual abuse and violence.**

7. We will continue to **develop the health response to domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence** to ensure that everyone is asked and given the opportunity to talk about abuse they may be experiencing.

8. We will **continue to develop our whole family approach to domestic abuse**, ensuring we know the needs of the whole family and make plans that work for everyone.

9. We will **ensure this strategy is aligned to the Childhood Sexual Abuse Strategy.**



2. Increasing access and breaking down barriers

We aim to develop an inclusive and needs-led, coordinated community system accessible to all.

Spotlight on best practice

The DIVAS are a group of women who have a range of learning disabilities, learning difficulties and/or autism, who have experienced domestic abuse and/or sexual abuse/violence. They meet regularly in a peer support group where friendships are formed, and where they can undertake healthy relationships education to talk about boundaries and what is acceptable behaviour in intimate relationships. The group has also chosen to reach out to others in the community (e.g. the police and the council) whom they say need to hear about their experiences so they can improve their understanding and responses to women with these disabilities who have been abused.



Health and social inequalities can make it much harder for some people to access support than others. The people impacted by these inequalities include some of our most vulnerable members of the community. There are additional barriers to escaping abuse and accessing support for different groups in our local population* who share particular protected characteristics and/ or share one or more vulnerabilities requiring additional support. We know that these marginalised groups of people are under-represented in our specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services and we need to look at different approaches to provide inclusive support.

The stigma and discrimination for people from marginalised groups and/ or with complex needs and multiple vulnerabilities is often high, meaning that they either do not or cannot access services or do not receive good quality, non-judgmental care and support. Individuals can be victim to multiple different abusive behaviours because of the way different characteristics, such as immigration status, sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion or belief,

socio-economic position, gender identity and sexual orientation intersect and overlap. This can create barriers to accessing services and support that are not designed to meet their needs. For example, non-serving victims in the Armed Forces who are separated have to leave their service accommodation and military community and maintaining contact with children for service victims can be difficult because of the friction of military service - overseas deployments and frequent postings.

It is important we have a better understanding and response to everyone's needs across our community, including those from marginalised groups. We need to work towards driving collaboration and reducing fragmentation, to enable a system wide response which includes increasing access and breaking down barriers to support. People should receive the response they need, when they want it, which should be tailored to all of their needs.

*Cornwall DASV Needs Assessment, Mapping the needs of different groups, p.30

What do we aim to do?

1. We will continue to develop our understanding of and improve our response to individuals' differing needs and what prevents them from receiving the right and appropriate types of support (intersectionality and marginalised groups).

2. We will ensure the voice of experts by experience continuously informs our response through collaboration and co-production.

3. We will raise the confidence of our workforce to recognise and respond to those impacted by domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence who have multiple vulnerabilities and/or are from marginalised groups.

4. We will continue to support effective system change to better respond to those with the most complex needs.

5. We will promote Compassionate Cornwall and rollout the Trauma-informed programme, to complement the whole system approach.

“loads of other places kept knocking me back”

COMPLEX NEEDS ACCOMMODATION CLIENT

“The word ‘historical’ pains me! The effect is not historical. I live it every single day. It affects every part of you.”

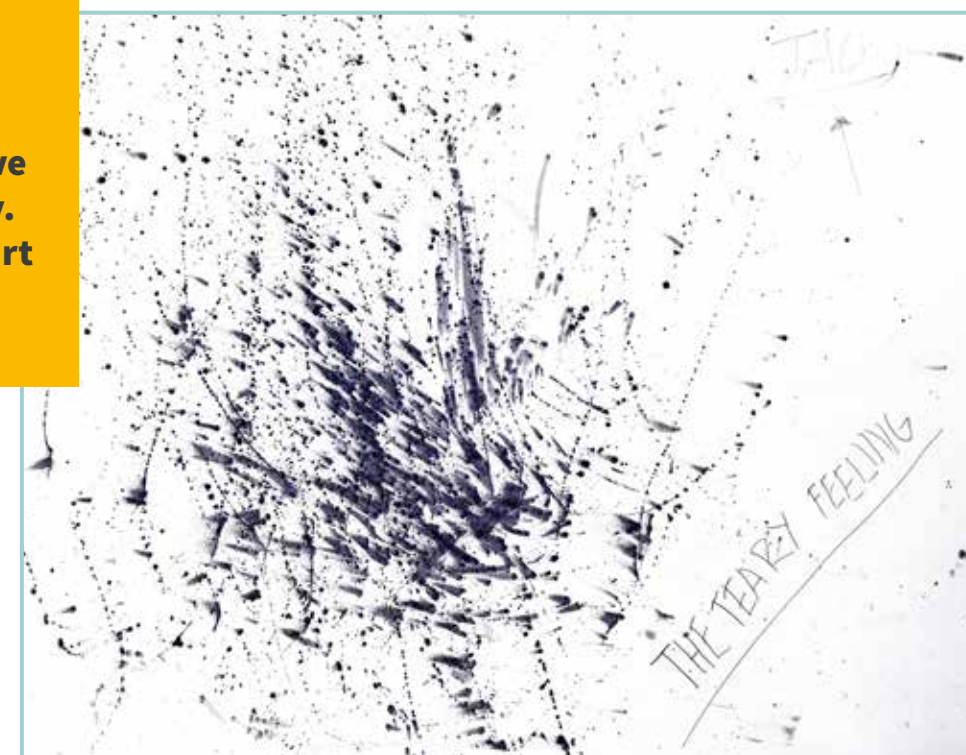


Photo credit: Clear Ideas

3. Behaviour change, protection and justice

We aim to progress and extend gender-informed prevention, support and interventions to challenge and change abusive behaviour.

We aim to improve the Criminal Justice System response to domestic abuse by providing trauma informed support for survivors, and holding those engaging in abusive behaviours to account.

In order to stop violence and abuse happening, we must improve our offer of support to individuals engaging in domestic abuse and/or sexual abuse/ violence and improve our criminal justice response to domestic abuse and sexual violence. We need to do more to ensure people who engage in abusive behaviours are held to account for their actions.

This includes reducing the impact of abuse on the family and reducing the likelihood of future incidents, whether through pursuing those showing abusive behaviours through the criminal justice system; via civil outcomes; through working with families to change behaviour; or through rehabilitation (within prison or the community).

The primary aim of working with individuals engaging in abusive behaviours is always to increase the safety and wellbeing of those experiencing the abuse. All reasonable steps are taken to make sure any support offered does not exacerbate or generate additional risks for those experiencing the abuse including their children.

We need to support sustainable behaviour change to respond to the needs of families wanting to stay together, despite the presence of abuse. Accessible and effective support can ensure that the whole family is as safe as possible while they recover, learn and manage change together.

“ Court processes are lengthy - advice and legislative support is very grey. ”

“ Police focus on ‘getting the right result’ for the victim can lead to them not being brought to account, increasing the risk of re-offending. ”

There needs to be adequate support for people reporting abuse and violence throughout the criminal justice process so more people experiencing abuse and violence have the confidence to speak out.

We are committed to transforming our community response to those engaging in abusive behaviours, so the right intervention is received at the right time.



Case Study

Phil self-referred to Safer Futures Change 4U programme after losing access to his three children six years ago.

During the assessment, Phil took accountability for his abusive behaviours, admitting to becoming physically abusive after the relationship failed due to his affair. Phil's current partner of six years engaged with partner support. Barriers were identified with regards to communication, specifically around difficult conversations/ disagreements.

Phil worked hard addressing these, practicing techniques with his partner who had been taught the same practices through partner support. He was able to make use of the coping mechanisms such as the breathing techniques, mediation, and time out.

Phil has now completed his behaviour change course - he has worked on topics that focus on parenting and co parenting skills and acknowledged his past behaviours. There have been no further incidents reported from the partner worker.

What do we aim to do?

1. We will jointly ensure that there is a **robust approach to identifying and responding to those engaging in abusive behaviours**. We will focus on increasing the challenge to those who engage in abuse and making those who engage in abuse more accountable for their actions.

2. We will ensure there is **support and behaviour change programmes available** to those who engage in abusive behaviour. We will continue to **deliver and expand our community domestic abuse programme**.

3. We will **reduce the huge disparity** between the number of reports to the police and positive criminal justice outcomes.

4. We will **improve our response to women in the criminal justice system** who have been impacted by domestic abuse and/or sexual abuse/violence.

5. We will **support individuals and families through their criminal justice journey** from arrest through to prosecution and beyond in order to ensure the timely, meaningful delivery of justice.

6. We will **end the blame culture for victims**, treating them with respect and support.

4. Greater support for victims and survivors

We aim to provide gender-informed support to those impacted by domestic abuse who are accessing, trying to access or unable to access specialist services.

In order to prevent further abuse we aim to provide a comprehensive range of services, from crisis support to longer term recovery and emotional well-being support.

We recognise that there are a variety of factors which may increase the likelihood of domestic abuse and sexual abuse/ violence and therefore, there is a need for different solutions which may be offered to those affected by it. In Cornwall we have a wide range of services for people impacted by domestic abuse, including, victim support, behaviour change programmes, child-centred approaches and couple and whole family interventions. These are described in more detail in our DASV Needs Assessment. We also have a wide offer of Safe Accommodation, providing places of safety and support for people who need to leave their home due to domestic abuse, a Sanctuary Scheme that provides security measures within homes. Our DASV Safe Accommodation & Housing Strategy describes this offer in more detail along with our priorities for improving the housing related response to domestic abuse.

We know that when people access services in Cornwall, they receive a good response. But often getting access is difficult due to different routes of access, waiting lists and service capacity, particularly for those who have experienced sexual abuse. We also know some people are not aware of the support that is available to them.

Geographically, Cornwall's population is widely distributed over mainly rural areas. Provision of public services and support for victims of domestic

abuse in rural parts of the county is limited and this issue is compounded by public transport also being limited, especially from rural areas to major towns and services. People living in rural areas who are affected by domestic abuse will often be isolated geographically and also socially from family and friends. Victims who live in tight-knit, rural communities can find it particularly difficult to access networks of support and escape routes. Attending meetings can be impossible without others in the community knowing and abusers can use this to further limit the victim's movements, rendering services even more inaccessible so victims feel unsupported and unprotected.

We aim to improve access to services; increase the number of people and families seeking support; and improve the long-term health and well-being of victims and their children. Services should be gender-informed and offer choice and flexibility.

A multi-agency response will be key to providing responsive, flexible services, which respond as early as possible.

Commissioning and service planning will be underpinned by human learning system principles, which ensure services meet the diverse needs of those who require them. When services are working with survivors and families, they will be needs-led, addressing the holistic needs of the families, including mental health and emotional wellbeing. Services will be based on need, rather than risk.

Spotlight on best practice

A team of children and young persons' sexual violence advocates have been brought together to support children and young people in Cornwall who have been impacted by non-contact child sexual abuse. These children would not have previously had access to advocate support. The service provides individual, emotional and practical support to meet the needs of the victim/survivor and their families; stay with them throughout their journey; and help them navigate other services.

What do we aim to do?

1. We will ensure services work together to **make the system easier to navigate and access.**
2. We will ensure there is a **range of choice and flexibility in the support we offer** across Cornwall, including gender specific services and services for families who want to stay together..
3. We will ensure **long term recovery support is prioritised alongside crisis support.**
4. We will **increase the support available** for adult victims of childhood sexual violence.
5. We will **develop our response** for those who are engaged in sex work and victims of sexual exploitation.
6. We will **support children and young people impacted by domestic abuse** as victims in their own right.
7. We will **review our service provision** for families impacted by child to parent/carer abuse and interfamilial domestic abuse.
8. We will **improve support to victims going through the family courts.**



“ It takes time for the victim to accept what has happened. You go within yourself not trusting anyone or anything. It's a roller-coaster of feelings, thinking that you are responsible for what happened to you. Sorry is a word that you say a million times but you don't know what you are sorry for. ”

“ As a rape survivor I really need ongoing support, such as monthly specialist counselling sessions, to help me try and achieve a more 'normal' life. The result of the trauma I experienced means that I can never get certain things out of my head, which makes it extremely difficult to engage with people and society in any meaningful way. ”

5. Working together

We aim to lead by example by working collaboratively and through co-production to simplify the system for those who use it.

Domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence have an enormous impact on every aspect of a person's life; an impact that is not limited to the individual experiencing the abuse directly but is felt by their whole family. Despite this, there is still a tendency for services to focus on one aspect of a person's life. This does not recognise the complexity of the issues and leads to simplified responses, where not everyone in the family gets the support they need.

Tackling domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence requires a 'whole-system' approach. A 'whole system' approach means different professionals and agencies (including criminal justice professionals,

as well as teachers, health and social care professionals and others); local and national government; charities; and others all **working together** to end domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence.

A successful partnership will have good working relationships and respect between agencies, but the key measure is the effect it has on improving support to survivors and their families. We will work together to lead a programme of work that will support changing attitudes and responses towards domestic abuse and sexual abuse/violence. This will also include the modelling of appropriate trauma informed language in relation to DASV, which reduces stigma, shame and judgement, and empowering others to use this language.

Spotlight on best practice

Joint commissioning

The partnership working and joint commissioning of Cornwall's Integrated DASV Community Service (Safer Futures) has been recognised as best practice nationally. The model brings together Cornwall Council, NHS England, Cornwall's Integrated Commissioning Board, Public Health and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to jointly fund the DASV community service. This has ensured that partners work together in their response and priorities and that access to DASV services is simplified.

What do we aim to do?

1. We will **ensure the voice of experts by experience continuously informs our response** through collaboration and co-production.
2. We will **share intelligence to partners on a quarterly basis** through the DASV Partnership Board, taking a Human Learning Systems approach.
3. We will **prioritise** domestic abuse and sexual violence in our plans, policies and processes.
4. We will work with local communities to **develop our responses to DASV** based on the assets they already hold.

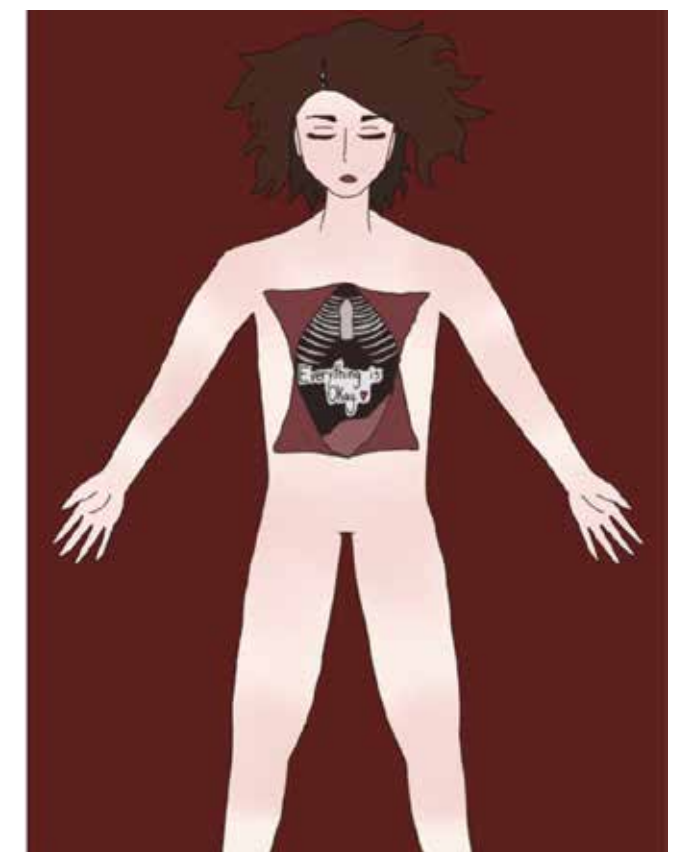
5. We will continue to work across the Peninsula to **join up systems and learn from best practice**.

6. We will **increase our joint commissioning of services** to simplify the system for those who need to access it.

“ I want all my care in one place, or as close together as possible. ”



Photo credit: Clear Ideas



Images credit: The Women's Centre Cornwall YEW project

We will know we are successful when...



Accessibility to services increases

People receive support at the right time and in the right place



We see increased reporting rates to the police and local services



People know what support is available and where to access it



Communities participate in being part of the solution

Professionals, parents/carers, young people, local businesses and residents, can identify domestic abuse and sexual violence, know who to contact and know what will be done in response



Lessons from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and other safeguarding reviews relevant to multi-agency working are put into practice and processes for monitoring implementation are agreed



Children and young people know what a healthy relationship looks like



Our community shows no tolerance for and challenges any behaviours that constitute domestic abuse or sexual violence



People feel supported by services who work together



Victims and survivors feel safer



People feel listened to by services, and in control of their own support

Representation from those from marginalised groups increases within our services



Successful criminal justice outcomes increase

Joint working protocols and practice will be in place that support robust information sharing between statutory and specialist domestic abuse services



We see a reduction in reoffending and revictimisation

There is justice for victims and survivors



Partnership investment is made available to support the ongoing development of co-location of specialist domestic abuse staff within appropriate organisations



Definitions

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 confirms the revised cross-government definition of domestic abuse as:

The behaviour of a person towards another person is domestic abuse if a) the two people are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and b) the behaviour is abusive. This can include behaviour directed at the child of the person experiencing abuse.

The definition is in two parts. The first part deals with the relationship between the abuser and the abused. The second part defines what constitutes abusive behaviour:

Section 1 | Definition of “domestic abuse”

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

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. “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.

5. 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).

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

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

Section 2 | Definition of “personally connected”

1. 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.

2. 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;
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996

Section 3 | Definition of “sexual assault”

- Any non-consensual sexual activity within any context
- Any penetrative or non-penetrative offence
- Sexual exploitation and grooming
- Trafficking of people for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- Pressure or coercion into sexual activity
- Sexting (sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or videos
- Sexual abuse via social media and online technology

- Sexual harassment
- Upskirting (where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission)
- Image based sexual abuse (it is now a crime to disclose or threaten to disclose private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress)
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)

**If you would like this information in another
format or language please contact us:**

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