

Redcar & Cleveland

Domestic Abuse Strategy – 2026-2029

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1. Foreword

Domestic abuse has been recorded throughout history and has been tolerated or even normalised within societies. Today we understand that abuse within the home and within present or past intimate relationships is unacceptable, and that abuse takes many forms, not just physical violence but also controlling and coercive behaviours. Domestic abuse victims are people of all ages, gender, socio-economic status, sexual identity and cultural background. Women victims make up the majority of the presenting cases however, male victims may remain hidden because of perceived stigma, leading to the victim experiencing shame and isolation. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right, if they have seen, heard or experienced the effect of the abuse.

Nationally, domestic abuse is seen as a high prevalence harm with the abuse impacting not only on individual victims but having a huge, far-reaching societal and economic cost. The Domestic Abuse Act places a duty on local authorities to develop and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation-based domestic abuse support to cover their locality and appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership.

The Redcar & Cleveland Domestic Abuse Strategy is built on a detailed understanding of the local picture informed by a comprehensive local needs assessment, the lived experience of domestic abuse survivors, and partnership working with those agencies who support victims of abuse.

The strategy has four key priorities to tackle domestic abuse:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Comprehensive support for victims
- Changing abusive behaviours by perpetrators
- Strong and effective partnership working

Progress in the delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and an annual submission is made to central government with regard to the Domestic Abuse Act Grant and support provision within safe accommodation.

For information on domestic abuse services available in Redcar and Cleveland please visit [Domestic abuse support | Redcar and Cleveland](#)

Cllr Ursula Earl
Cabinet Member for Health, Welfare & Housing Support

2. Introduction

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes a duty on local authorities to assess the need for, and commission support to, victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England.

The Act also requires local authorities to prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support having regard to the local needs assessment.

The Domestic Abuse Act can be accessed via this link [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

What Is Domestic Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as 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 and over and **personally connected** to each other.

- Persons must be 'personally connected':
- They are, or have been, married to each other.
- They are, or have been, civil partners of each other.
- They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
- They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
- They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
- They are relatives.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is defined in section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 as “a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” Key elements of the offence are that the behaviour:

- Is repeated or continuous
- Takes place in an intimate or family relationship
- Has a serious effect on the victim (e.g. causing fear of violence on at least two occasions, or causing serious alarm or distress that substantially affects day-to-day activities)
- The perpetrator knows or ought to know the behaviour will have that effect

This offence recognises that domestic abuse is not only about physical violence, but about ongoing patterns of power and control.

The Domestic Abuse Act recognises **post-separation abuse** through coercive and controlling behaviour. It no longer makes it a requirement for perpetrators and victims to either still be in a relationship or to still live together.

The act also recognises **children as victims** of domestic abuse. This means that a child who sees or hears, or experiences domestic abuse, and is related to the person being abused or to the perpetrator, is to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right and

considered in need of help and protection by the Local Authority, as well as those directly injured or abused.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 can be accessed here:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted

While the definition above applies to those aged 16 or above, **Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse' (CAPVA)** can equally involve children under 16 as well as over 16. There is currently no legal definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse, however, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse.

Respect provides a working definition, and defines CAPVA as:

"The dynamic where a young person (8 years -18 years) engages in repeated abusive behaviour towards a parent or adult carer. Abusive behaviour can include physical violence; emotional, economic or sexual abuse; and coercive control. It may also include damage to property and abuse towards other family members, particularly siblings."

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) is a form of domestic abuse involving a range of controlling, coercive, threatening or violent behaviours used to punish or harm an individual who is perceived to have brought shame or dishonour upon their family or community. It is typically rooted in rigid social or gender norms, may be perpetrated by multiple family or community members and is never justified by culture, religion or tradition. HBA can include forced marriage, physical and sexual violence, coercive control, and female genital mutilation.

Stalking is a pattern of fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviour directed at another person that causes fear, alarm, distress or a substantial adverse impact on their day-to-day life. In the context of domestic abuse, stalking is frequently used as a means of coercion, control and intimidation during a relationship, following separation, or after the abuse has ended. Stalking behaviours may include persistent unwanted contact, surveillance, monitoring movements or communications, following, threats, cyberstalking, repeated attendance at a victim's home or workplace, interference with property, or using family members, children, friends or technology to maintain control and contact.

3. Links to other Plans and Strategies

Freedom from Violence and Abuse Strategy

The Government's Freedom from Violence and Abuse strategy sets out a national ambition to halve violence against women and girls within a decade through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The strategy emphasises prioritising prevention, tackling the root causes of abuse (including misogyny and gender inequality) and relentlessly pursuing perpetrators. It also highlights the importance of consistent, survivor-centred support, recognising that violence and abuse cause long-term trauma and require coordinated responses across public services, specialist organisations, and communities. The strategy stresses that meaningful progress depends on improving early identification, strengthening multi-agency working, and ensuring high-quality, accessible support that empowers victims and survivors.

The Strategy can be accessed via this link [Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Councils' Corporate Plan has four priorities, Start Life Well, Live and Age Well, Prosper and Flourish and Clean and Tidy.



The plan can be accessed via this link [RCBC Corporate Plan.pdf](#)

Redcar & Cleveland's Community Safety plan

Redcar & Cleveland Community Safety Partnership's commitment to tackling domestic abuse is demonstrated in its plan 2024-2027 as a theme under the priority 'Prevention' with the following actions:

- The Local Needs Assessment is due to be written in 2024, with a review of the DA Strategy to follow (this has been completed and referred to in Section 6)
- The imminent Victims and Prisoners Bill will introduce a 'Duty to Collaborate' between police, health and LAs—this needs to be fully understood (The Victims and Prisoners Act came into force in 2025 but the Duty to Collaborate has not been implemented – awaiting statutory guidance)
- Develop Cleveland-wide Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy (this has been completed and referred to below)

The plan can be accessed via this link [Community Safety Plan 2024-27.pdf](#)

Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) have developed a Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy with a vision 'for all adults and children in Teesside to be safe from the harm, fear and control associated with domestic abuse', with the following objectives:

- To carry out a needs assessment
- Build insights and raise awareness
- Build skills, capacity and attributes in our workforce
- Develop and support the Criminal Justice System response

The strategy can be accessed via this link [Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy 2025 - 2035](#)

Local agencies across the borough will collaborate to support victims (the vast majority, according to our local data being women and girls). We all recognise that there is still much work to be done in order to:

- Safeguard all victims and their families comprehensively.
- Reduce the number of repeat incidents.
- Reinforce to all perpetrators that domestic abuse is unacceptable and will be dealt with swiftly and effectively using the full weight of the criminal justice system.
- Address the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, and other family members regardless of whether they live in the same household.
- Develop our processes to help limit the need for survivors and victims and their families to revisit their trauma.

The Tees Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2024-2029

The Tees Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2024-2029 recognising domestic abuse as a significant risk factor for suicide and suicidal behaviour. The strategy commits to developing a better understanding of the relationship between domestic abuse and suicide through research, data collection and partnership working with Cleveland Police and voluntary sector organisations, with the aim of establishing more robust and timely support pathways for those affected. It also recognises that people experiencing domestic abuse may have complex and overlapping needs linked to trauma, mental ill health, substance misuse, social isolation, financial hardship and housing insecurity, all of which can increase suicide risk.

The plan can be accessed via this link [Tees Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2024 002.pdf](#)

Sexual Harms Network

The Cleveland Sexual Harms Network is a multi-agency partnership established to improve the collective response to sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation across Cleveland. Bringing together statutory, voluntary and community sector partners, the Network seeks to strengthen prevention, improve the identification of sexual harms, coordinate strategic activity, and enhance victim-survivor experiences and confidence in services.

The Network complements domestic abuse, safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) partnership arrangements by providing a dedicated forum to address the specific challenges associated with sexual harm and exploitation.

4. Developing the Strategy

In recent years, we have made many positive steps to improve our response to domestic abuse in Redcar and Cleveland, but we know we must go further. We must build on what we know works. This strategy draws together the emerging priorities from the local needs assessment which includes data from a range of organisations, survey responses, case studies and interviews with victims and survivors. In addition, key stakeholders have been

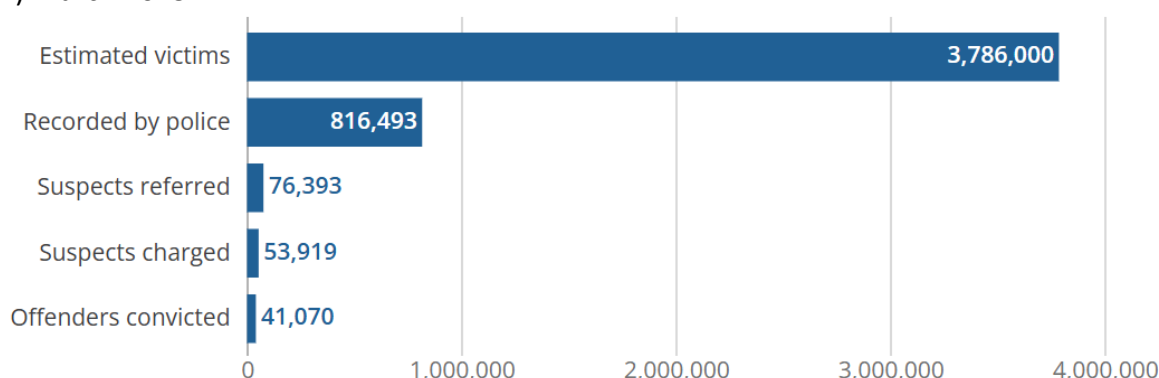
consulted, engaging in open, transparent, and reflective conversation to identify ways to improve.

We will work towards reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse across Redcar and Cleveland and ensure that where it does occur that we provide, at the earliest opportunity, the right support and services to minimise the short-term and long-term impact it has on local victims, children and their families. We will create an environment where high quality, wide-ranging support services are accessible, that are operationally and financially sustainable, to protect and provide for victims and their families on their journey to recovery.

We recognise that domestic abuse cannot be prevented or reduced through support for victims alone. To stop domestic abuse from continuing and repeating, we must also work directly with those who cause harm. This means holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviour while providing evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions that challenge attitudes, address patterns of abuse, and support lasting behaviour change. By focusing on perpetrator behaviour alongside victim safety, we can reduce repeat abuse, improve safety for victims and children, and create long-term change across our communities.

5. The National picture

National domestic abuse data from incident to conviction England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics, Police recorded crime data from the Home Office, and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

The Social and Economic Cost of Domestic Abuse

Economic Cost - Multiple recent government and oversight bodies provide updated estimates of the financial impact of domestic abuse across society:

Annual Cost to Society

- The Domestic Abuse Commissioner reports that domestic abuse costs society approximately £85 billion per year, based on updated 2019 Home Office methodology

adjusted to July 2024 prices. [Microsoft Word - DAC Submission - HMT Autumn 2024 Budget and SR - v.2](#)

- The National Audit Office similarly reports an equivalent annual economic and social cost of £84 billion in 2024–25 prices, uplifted from earlier Home Office estimates. [Tackling violence against women and girls - Summary](#)

Earlier Home Office Base Estimate

- The Home Office's 2019 report estimated the economic and social costs at £66 billion per year, which has since been adjusted upward to £85 billion due to inflation and additional victim categories (e.g. child victims). [Microsoft Word - DAC Submission - HMT Autumn 2024 Budget and SR - v.2](#)

Cost Drivers

The total economic cost includes several components:

- Physical and mental health impacts (NHS and specialist services)
- Lost productivity (absence, reduced employment, long-term unemployment)
- Criminal justice costs (policing, courts, probation, imprisonment)
- Social care and safeguarding
- Housing and homelessness costs
- Victim support services
- Human and emotional costs, which represent the largest proportion of the £84–£85 billion total

(While detailed breakdowns are in the earlier Home Office methodology, the sources above confirm updated totals.)

Social Cost

Domestic abuse creates far-reaching social harm across individuals, families, communities and public systems.

Domestic abuse as a widespread, societal issue

- An estimated 3.8 million people aged 16+ experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2025 (7.8% of the population). [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)
- Around 12.5 million people (25.8% of the adult population) have experienced domestic abuse since age 16. [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
- More than 75,000 people in the UK are at high and imminent risk of serious harm or homicide each year. [Data about domestic abuse - SafeLives](#)

Impact on Children

- One in five children experience domestic abuse and are recognised as victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. [Microsoft Word - DAC Submission - HMT Autumn 2024 Budget and SR - v.2](#)
- Children exposed to domestic abuse face long-term consequences including trauma, behavioural impacts, disrupted education, and higher likelihood of future victimisation or offending.

Health and Wellbeing

- Domestic abuse results in significant health consequences including physical injury, chronic illness, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and increased risk of substance misuse.
- Women are disproportionately affected and more likely to experience severe forms of abuse: e.g. 92% of IDVA service users and 94% of MARAC cases are women. [Data about domestic abuse - SafeLives](#)

Community and System Strain

- Over 1.3 million domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes were recorded by police in the year to March 2025. [Data about domestic abuse - SafeLives](#)
- Significant ongoing pressure is placed on housing services, safeguarding partnerships, criminal justice agencies, and health systems.

Key Points

- Domestic abuse remains a high-prevalence, high-impact form of harm affecting millions of adults and children.
- The most robust recent estimates place the annual economic and social cost at £84–£85 billion.
- The social impacts are profound, spanning lifelong trauma, intergenerational harm, reduced life chances, and community-wide consequences.
- Investment in prevention, early intervention, and specialist support is widely described by government and commissioner bodies as cost-saving, given the scale of harm and associated financial burden. [Microsoft Word - DAC Submission - HMT Autumn 2024 Budget and SR - v.2](#)

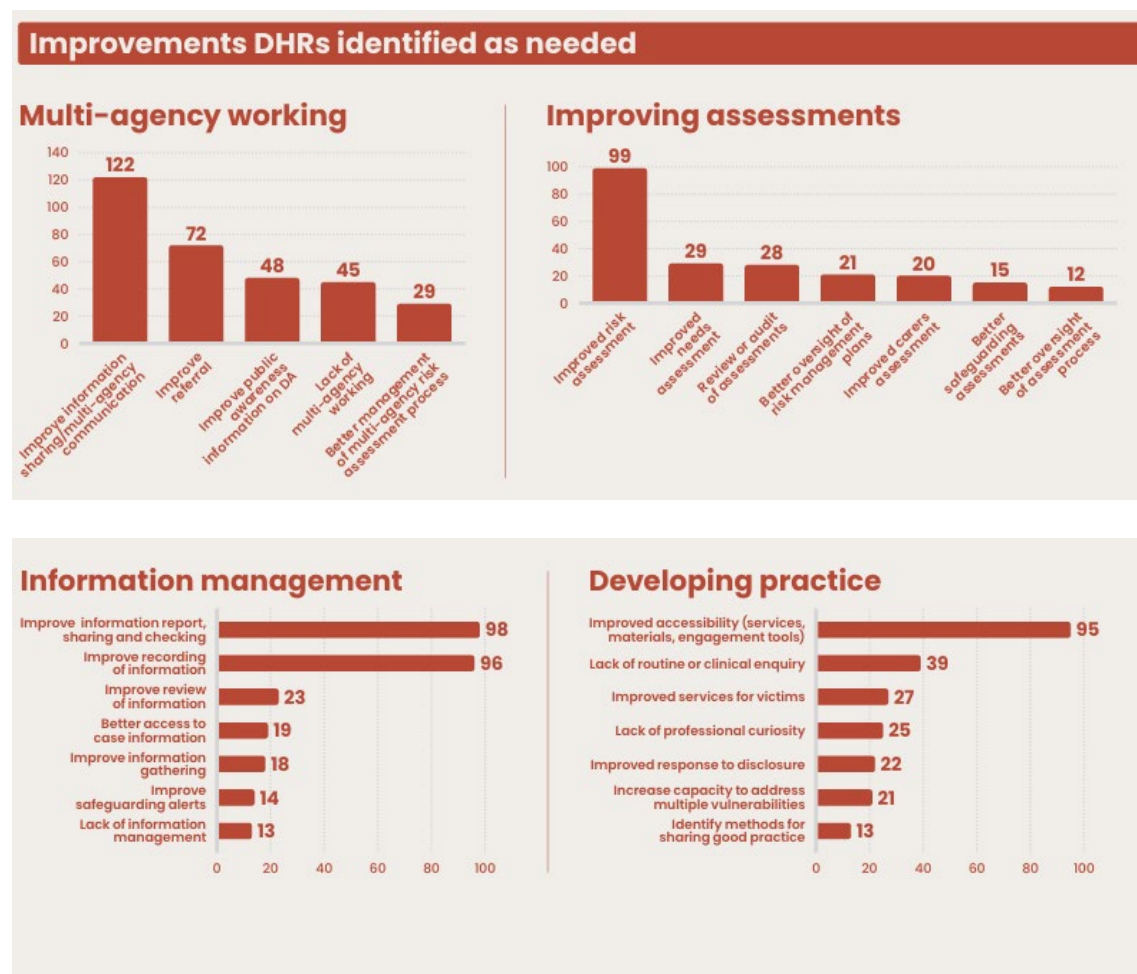
Domestic abuse and suicide

The Domestic Homicide Project Year 5 report states that since Year 3 (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023) recorded cases of Suspected Victim Suicides related to Domestic Abuse (SVSDA) have surpassed the number of recorded Intimate Partner Homicides (IPH), with SVSDA being the most recorded typology across the full five-year dataset (38%). The increased reporting of SVSDA cases is likely due to improved awareness and identification of the link between suicide and domestic abuse. The number of IPH deaths has remained relatively stable over the five years of data collection. This continues to highlight the enduring issue of abuse by an intimate partner, its consequences and the need to work towards prevention

The executive summary can be accessed here [NCVPP Executive Summary: Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides 2020-2025. Year 5 Report](#)

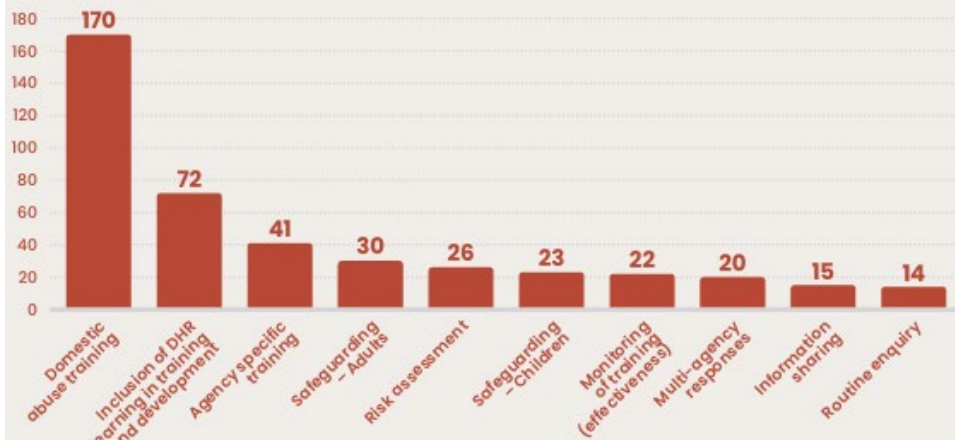
Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) previously known as Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

In the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report 'Learning from Loss', which highlights the need for oversight of recommendations from DHRs, several themes were identified from the pilot sites involved, displayed in the tables below.

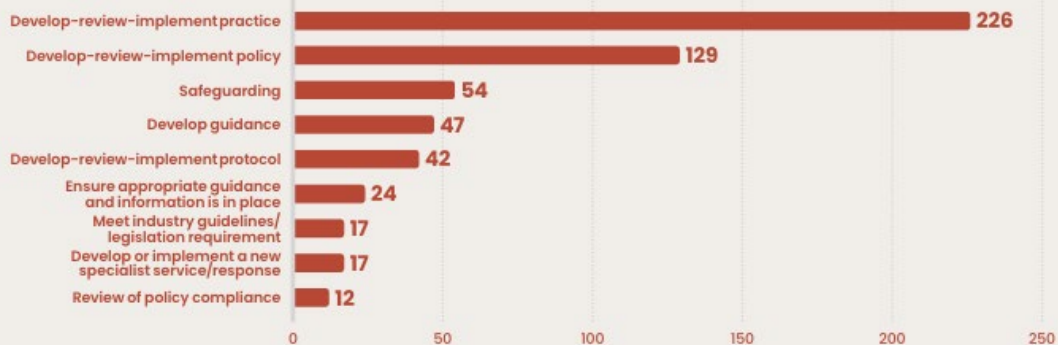


Improvements DHRs identified as needed (continued)

Training and development of staff



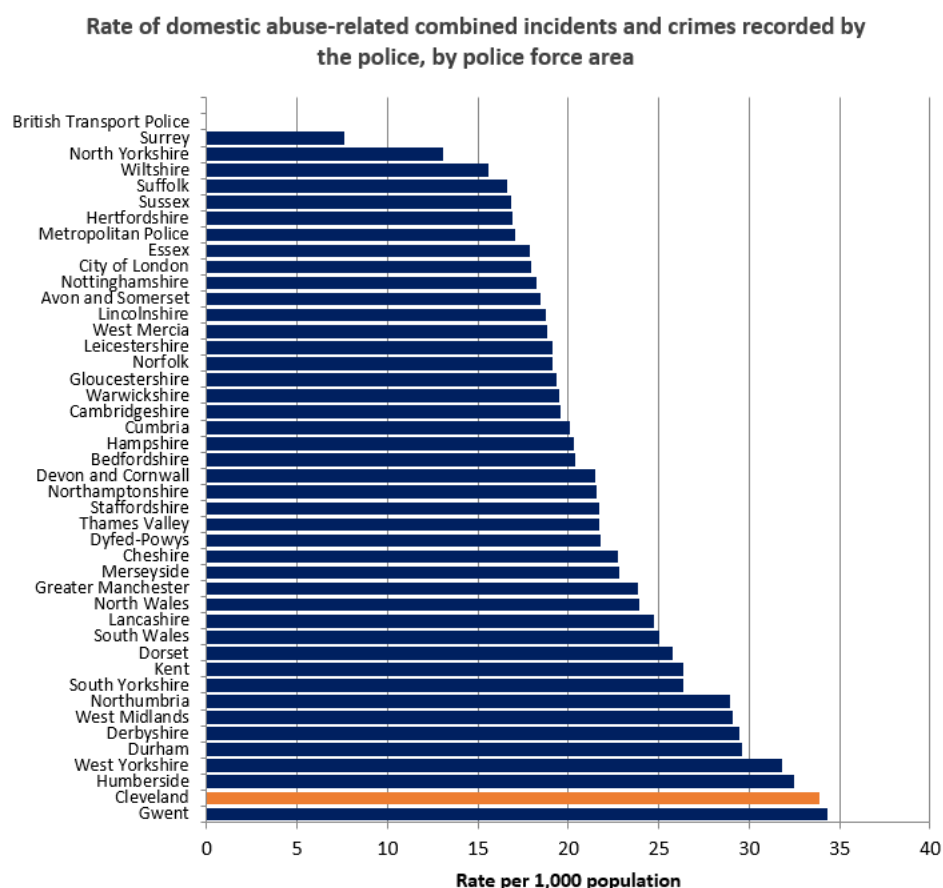
Policy and process



The full report can be accessed via this link [Learning-from-Loss.pdf](#)

6. The Local Picture

The table below shows that Cleveland Police Force (covering Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool) has one of the highest rates of recorded domestic abuse. In Cleveland, 20,355 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes were recorded in the year ending March 2025. This was equivalent to 34 incidents and crimes for every 1,000 people in the population.



We know that too many incidents are never reported to the Police, and it is generally accepted that the number of incidents of domestic abuse is under-reported, with national research indicating that it takes on average between two and a half to three years before a victim seeks support for the first time. Victims can often require support multiple times over an extended period.

SafeLives research indicates that families lived with domestic abuse for 2.7 years before getting effective help at the time of the 2015 report, and more recent data (2022) shows:

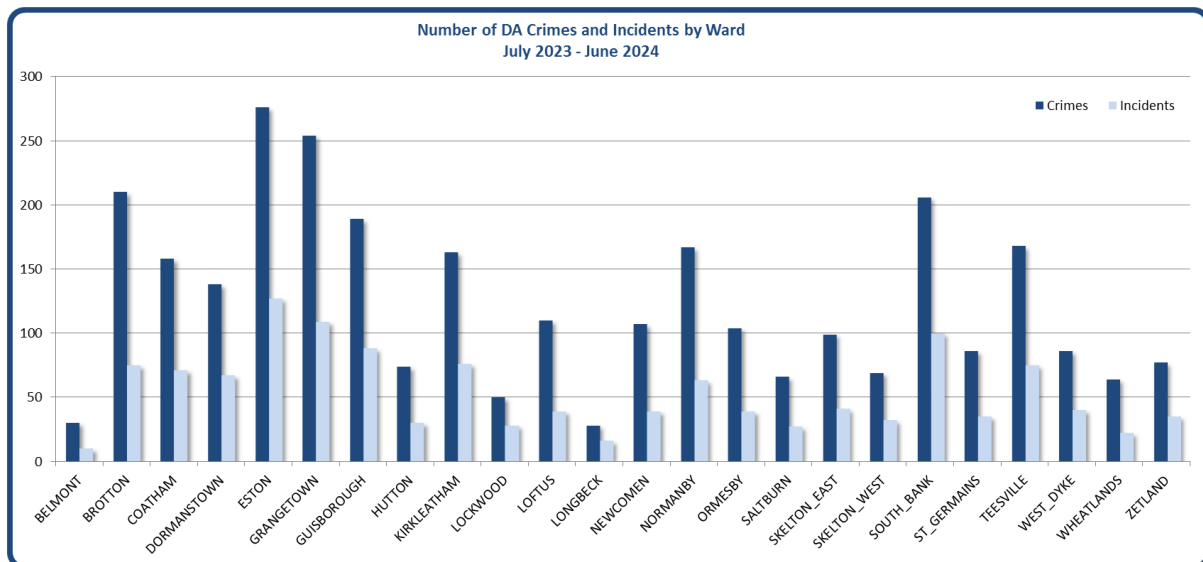
- 2.5 years to access IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) support
- 4 years to access effective outreach support

[Getting it right the first time - SafeLives](#)

The recording of incidences of domestic abuse is far from straightforward, and looking solely at the number of incidents reported to the Police does not give an accurate indication of domestic abuse incidence in the borough. It is therefore important to consider data from a wide range of other sources, including referrals to specialist domestic abuse services and key partner agencies, as well as repeat victimisation and repeat and serial offending.

Redcar and Cleveland - Locations of DA crimes and incidents

The Chart below shows the ward distribution for both DA related crimes and incidents for July – June 2023/24.



The table below displays the top 5 wards for both DA crimes and incidents in alphabetical order. As can be seen, 4 wards in each category are in the top 5 for both – Eston, Grangetown, Guisborough and South Bank. Broton and Kirkleatham are the anomalies.

DA Crimes	DA Incidents
Broton	Eston
Eston	Grangetown
Grangetown	Guisborough
Guisborough	Kirkleatham
South Bank	South Bank

Domestic abuse is prevalent in all neighbourhoods, and it is not confined to particular communities, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social or economic status. Some groups are more likely to be victims i.e. women. Domestic abuse impacts on the individual and their family, regardless of social demographic, geographic or cultural background.

Redcar and Cleveland – Headlines from the Local Needs Assessment

Theme	Headline Insight	Key Data / Metrics
Overall Incidents (Police)	Domestic abuse incidents continue to rise	4,145 incidents (July 2023–June 24); +7.6% year-on-year; 30.2 per 1,000 population
Comparative Position	Second lowest incident rate locally but high nationally	Lowest: Stockton; Cleveland Force: 2nd highest DA rate in England (35 per 1,000)
Crime Outcomes	High proportion recorded as crimes but low resolved outcomes	74.3% recorded as crimes; 10.5% solved rate (highest locally)
Repeat Victimisation	Repeat incidents remain high	41.9% involve a repeat victim; 2nd highest locally
Contribution to Total Crime	DA contributes over one-fifth of all crime	21.2% of reported crime; 77% violent offences

Arrests	Arrest rates improving but remain low	41.1% arrest rate; +4.7% year-on-year; 2nd lowest locally
Housing & Homelessness	High temporary accommodation use by DA victims	56 placements (16.6% of all temporary accommodation placements)
Demographic Recording	Recording improving but gaps remain	Police record age/gender only; other characteristics inconsistent
Gender	Women majority victims but male victimisation significant	Police: 71.8% female; 874 male victims; varying male representation in services
LGBTQ+ Representation	LGBTQ+ victims likely underreported	5.2–8.6% identify as LGB in service data
Age Profile	Most victims aged 25–54; highest 35–44	Nationally highest prevalence among 16–24; underrepresentation of 55+ in services
Older Victims	High older victim numbers not reflected in services	Police: 16.5% aged 55+; ASC: 43.7% aged 55+; DA services: 0–10%
Ethnicity	Patterns reflect population; small minority representation	95–97% White; Halo supported 24 BAME victims
Refuge Demand	High proportion of out-of-area victims	57% of refuge referrals from outside LA area
Marital Status	Separated/divorced most at risk	Most victims single or in non-cohabiting relationships
Disability	Disabled victims overrepresented	41.4% homelessness; 16.3% Harbour; 53.3% EVA (type not captured)

For more information see the full Local Needs Assessment Report here <https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-09/Domestic%20Abuse%20Local%20Needs%20Assessment%20-%20Safe%20Accommodation.pdf>

In the last four years (since the last strategy) there has been one domestic homicide review which is ongoing. In the preceding five years prior to 2022, there were three domestic homicide reviews involving four victims.

Domestic abuse incidents are continuing to rise. This in turn means that there continues to be a high demand for services to support those affected by domestic abuse. It is therefore paramount that future service provision is focussed and targeted into areas of greatest need, to prevent or reduce the incidence of domestic abuse in the long-term.

We need to take a more focussed approach to understanding the issues faced by particular groups in society. This includes elderly people, BAME communities, LGBTQ+ communities (amongst others). We will ensure that all domestic abuse provision is tailored to meet the needs of all residents across Redcar & Cleveland, including all groups with protected characteristics.

Adult Social Care

Safeguarding concerns received about adults with care and support needs for domestic abuse are as below:

Under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to make, or cause to be made, enquiries in cases where they reasonably suspect that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from this actual or risk of abuse and neglect.

In 2023/24, 106 safeguarding concerns were raised in Redcar and Cleveland regarding adults with care and support needs who were affected by domestic abuse, representing 5.6% of the total. While this marks a slight decrease from 5.8% in the previous year, it remains higher than figures from earlier years (4–4.9%).

Despite no significant rise, there is a gradual upward trend, potentially due to greater awareness among practitioners and improved identification of domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue.

33 Section 42 enquiries related to domestic abuse, accounting for 7.7% of all S42 enquiries. This is slightly down from 8.3% in the previous year, but historical data shows fluctuations between 5% and 8% over the past five years, making it difficult to determine a clear trajectory.

Due to the relatively low number of Section 42 enquiries compared to broader safeguarding concerns, percentage variations can be influenced by small changes in case numbers. As a result, identifying definitive trends remains challenging.

Children's Social Care

Between April 2023 and March 2024, concerns about a child's parent being subject to domestic abuse were recorded in a significant number of children's social care cases (36.3%).

8.1% of cases also had recorded concerns of a child being subject to domestic abuse.

A smaller number of cases (2.8%) recorded concerns about another person living at the house being subject to DA.

This shows domestic abuse is a prevalent factor within children's social care cases, particularly where there are concerns about a child's parent being subjected to domestic abuse. This indicates that children's social care professionals are adept to recognising signs that domestic abuse may be present within a household and that in many domestic abuse cases there is need to protect and accommodate families with children within safe accommodation.

A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse in Redcar and Cleveland was completed in April 2025. The inspection identified strengths and observed that children affected by domestic abuse in Redcar & Cleveland are generally well supported through prompt, collaborative action by practitioners across services. Leadership commitment to reform, alongside strong commissioned services and consistent safeguarding referrals by frontline responders, reflects a system actively working to improve outcomes for vulnerable children. Nonetheless, the inspection also drew upon a number of areas for improvement, as highlighted below:

- The STSCP governance arrangements, development and alignment of a specific children's domestic abuse strategy across the partnership that recognises children as victims of domestic abuse.
- Redcar & Cleveland's understanding and needs assessment of the impact of domestic abuse on unborn and young children's unique and diverse needs locally.
- The inclusion and consideration of children's experiences in referrals and in multiagency meetings.
- How well practitioners across the partnership are listening to the voices of children and understanding what it means for children to be victims of domestic abuse.
- Communication with and involvement of probation services strategically and operationally.
- The overreliance of safety plans on non-abusing parents, mostly mothers, in protecting children.
- Multi-agency training for all agencies in recognising children as victims of domestic abuse and understanding parental consent.
- The consistent completion of work with perpetrators of domestic abuse and engagement with victims prior to decisions being made to end child protection plans.

Following the JTAI a **Children's Needs Assessment** has been carried out, which includes the following.

Highest Contact Presenting Problems between 2024/25 and 2025/26 (31.01.2026):

		2024/2025		2025/26 To 31.01.2026	
Presenting Problem	Number of Contacts	14,262		13,151	
	Behavioural difficulties	1463	10.3%	1098	8.3%
	Domestic abuse by parent/carer	3279	23%	3559	27.1%
	Drug misuse by parent/carer	618	4.3%	507	3.9%
	Mental Health of child	606	4.2%	675	5.1%
	Mental Health of parent carer	752	5.3%	623	4.7%
	Physical abuse of child	759	5.3%	616	4.7%

Highest Assessment Factors between 2024 / 2025 and 2025/2026 (31.01.2026):

		2024/25		2025/26 to 31.01.26	
Assessment Factors	Number of Assessments*	2514		1952	
	Alcohol misuse: Concerns about alcohol misuse by the parent/carer	466	18.5%	497	25.5%
	Drug misuse: Concerns about drug misuse by the parent/carer	603	24%	609	31.2%
	Domestic abuse: Concerns about the child's parent/carer being the subject of domestic abuse.	783	31.1%	811	41.5%
	Mental health: Concerns about the mental health of the child	380	15.1%	485	24.8%

	Mental health: Concerns about the mental health of the parent/carer	926	36.8%	889	45.5%
	NEGLECT: Concerns that services may be required or the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to abuse or neglect	552	22%	365	18.7%
	EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Concerns that services may be required or the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to abuse or neglect	390	15.5%	382	19.6%
	PHYSICAL ABUSE (adult on child): concerns that services may be required or the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to abuse or neglect by an adult.	239	9.5%	158	8.1%

* Includes reassessments within the year. ** Assessments can include more than one factor

For the year to date (31.01.2026):

- 27.1% of contacts related to Domestic abuse by parent/carer
- 9.9% of contacts related to Mental Health of either parent/carer or child
- 3.9% of contacts related to drug misuse by parent/carer

Once reaching assessment stage it is evident that we have seen increases in the following presenting factors:

- Alcohol misuse from 18.5% to 25.5%
- Drug misuse by either parent/carer from 24% to 31.2%
- Domestic abuse for the child's parent/carer from 31.1% to 41.5%
- Mental health for either parent/carer or child from 51.9% to 70.3%

16- and 17-year-olds

The 'Beyond the Headlines' report takes an annual look at trends in violence affecting children and young people and whilst the 2026 report shows improvements in some of the indicators, a new indicator has been added that focuses on violence against young women and girls where the trend is more concerning. There is limited national data in this area and locally it is understood that this is an under-developed area and the Youth Justice Service (YJS) is working with the OPCC on developing a dataset in respect of this.

The full report can be accessed via this link [YEF-Beyond-the-Headlines-2026.pdf](#)

What people with lived experience have told us

1. Barriers to Accessing Support

- Many survivors feel shame or embarrassment seeking help, particularly in drug and alcohol services, where waiting areas feel unsafe or stigmatising.
- Fear of children being removed by Social Services remains a major barrier to disclosing abuse or accessing support.
- Previous negative experiences with domestic abuse services, especially out of area, create fear and distrust.

- Some survivors avoid reporting to the police because previous reports did not help, increased danger, or were perceived as not taken seriously.

2. Experiences of Statutory Agencies

- Survivors report feeling that mothers carry the burden of proving they can protect children, especially during crisis.
- Some police responses are described as positive, but others are still experienced as dismissive, with attitudes such as “not again”.
- When placed out of area, survivors sometimes experience confusion about their allocated social worker and reduced access to family support networks.
- Long waits for counselling remain a significant issue, although check-in calls are valued.

3. What Helps and What Works

- Refuge and safe accommodation are often experienced positively, especially where there is:
 - Mental wellbeing support
 - Counselling
 - Family and Children and Young Person (CYP) support
 - Routine, activities, and engagement
 - Access to specialist workers (e.g., for health, court processes)
- Survivors value respectful treatment, helpful police encounters, and access to GPs and legal support.
- Practical support is crucial: housing applications, school registration, budgeting, transport to refuge (including taxis), and ability to bring pets.
- Programmes like the Freedom Programme help build understanding of abuse, reduce self-blame, and support survivors to regain control and establish boundaries.

4. Psychological and Emotional Needs

- Survivors value support that makes them feel safe, heard, and believed.
- Many describe arriving at services at their lowest point, and the environment receiving them makes a critical difference.
- Social media and accessible communication play a powerful role in encouraging survivors to reach out.

5. Support Gaps and Areas for Development

- Need for faster move-on from refuges to settled accommodation to increase capacity to support newly identified DA victims.
- Desire for more family work, wellbeing services, and counselling capacity.
- Ongoing need for improved police training, especially around bias and understanding the nuances of DA.
- Need for more information and awareness-raising around domestic abuse.

- Survivors with complex needs (mental health, substance use, NRPF, disability) often need more specialist accommodation options.

6. Survivor Insights for Future Service Development

- Maintain the breadth of support within safe accommodation: mental health, counselling, family support, CYP services, and therapeutic provision.
- Consider perpetrator accommodation and a full perpetrator response package.
- Explore developing a multiple-needs refuge for survivors with overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Improve awareness of refuge provision for professionals through introduction visits.
- Increase social media visibility, including information tailored for male victims.
- Invest in workforce development to improve confidence, consistency, and victim-centred practice.

7. Demand for services – Safe Accommodation

- Harbour received 267 total referrals in 2023/24 – 263 for Refuge and 4 for Dispersed Properties (some duplication occurs where referrals did not specify a location, as Harbour operates across Cleveland, Durham, and Northumbria).
- Out-of-Area referrals accounted for 48 cases (18.3%), including requests from North Yorkshire, Wales, Scotland, London and Birmingham.
- The most common reason for refusing a referral was lack of space – 178 out of 263 Refuge referrals were declined for this reason.
- 64 women and their families were supported in Refuge, and 4 in dispersed properties, totalling 135 women and children.
- The Sanctuary Scheme received 120 referrals, with 64 properties receiving target-hardening works.
 - 33 were private rented or owner-occupied homes.
 - 31 were social housing properties.
- The Sanctuary Scheme enabled 189 victims and their children to remain safely in their homes and avoid homelessness.

8. Domestic Abuse Service Provision

THRIVE partnership

In Redcar and Cleveland, THRIVE is an Integrated Domestic Abuse and Substance Use (IDAS) partnership that brings together specialist domestic abuse, substance use and behaviour-change services under a single collaborative model.

The partnership includes:

- WithYou – lead provider for substance misuse services
- Harbour – specialist domestic abuse support services
- Intuitive Thinking Skills (ITS) – behaviour change, recovery and ambassador programmes

- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Safe Accommodation Provision

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises the critical importance of support for victims and their children within relevant safe accommodation, as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse.

The table below gives details of the current safe accommodation in Redcar and Cleveland (this covers commissioned and non-commissioned safe accommodation as at 31st March 2026).

	Accommodation Provision	Number of Units	Support within Safe Accommodation
Harbour (Commissioned Provider)	The Refuge	12 self-contained flats, ranging from one to three bedrooms with units having from one to six beds with one unit being accessible.	• Support workers • Mental Wellbeing Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Family Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Counselling for women and children (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Recovery support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Access to services within the THRIVE partnership – With You drug and alcohol services, ITS courses
Harbour (Commissioned Provider)	Dispersed Properties	12 houses/flats situated throughout Redcar and Cleveland (as at February 2026) This has risen from 3 when the last strategy was published in February 2022.	• Support workers • Mental Wellbeing Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Family Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Counselling for women and children (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Recovery support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Access to services within the THRIVE partnership – With You drug and alcohol services, ITS courses
EVA Women's Aid (Local Provider)	Safe House Accommodation (Dispersed properties))	3 shared houses (2 standard, 1 for age 45+ total of 12 bed spaces for single women.	Some of the support within the safe accommodation is commissioned by us: Move-On Support Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) Support Plus Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) 'You and Me Mum' programme (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)

EVA Women's Aid (Local Provider)	Move-on flats (second-stage accommodation)	7 single person flats for women.	Some of the support within the safe accommodation is commissioned by us: Move-On Support Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) Support Plus Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) 'You and Me Mum' programme (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)
Harbour (commissioned provider)	Sanctuary Scheme (target hardening)	For victims who wish to remain in their own home (64 properties in 2023/24)	Support depending on need and risk. Outreach support - a dedicated Support worker providing emotional and practical support. Ongoing support offered via Recovery service.

The Council of Europe and Istanbul Convention recommends a minimum of 1 unit of domestic abuse dedicated accommodation per 10,000 population. The latest census (2021) shows Redcar & Cleveland having a population of 136,500 and therefore should have at least 14 units of DA dedicated accommodation. Harbour (commissioned provider) have 24 units (12 in refuge and 12 in dispersed). In addition to this EVA Women's Aid have safe accommodation; dispersed 'safe houses' with 13 bed spaces and 7 single move-on flats. EVA Women's Aid accommodation is not commissioned, although Redcar & Cleveland Council have funded some of the support provision from the Domestic Abuse Act Grant. This significantly exceeds what is expected.

The Housing Advice Service places people in self-contained accommodation when no refuge space is available with a specialist provider.

For some groups, financial barriers make accessing safe accommodation extremely difficult, particularly for the following:

- Those who are working and are not eligible for Housing Benefit
- Those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

Commissioned support provision accessible to those living within the borough

Beyond safe accommodation, Harbour is commissioned to deliver the following community services:

- IDVA support
- Outreach and assertive outreach
- Children and Young People (CYP) support
- Perpetrator prevention work (including victim safety planning)
- Inspire Programme (Harbour's version of the Freedom Programme)
- Recovery Service (peer support available when support has ended)
- GP IDVA (works with GP surgeries across Redcar and Cleveland)

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has also provided funding for the following (Tees wide):

- Hospital IDVAs (1 x North Tees and 1 x South Tees)
- Court IDVA
- Mental Health IDVA
- IDVAs that sit within LA commissioned services
- Funding for Halo to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) victims

Additional Tees-wide Services

- EVA Women's Aid, a domestic abuse service, that offers specialist support to victims of domestic abuse and counselling for victims of sexual violence and abuse (in addition to the provision of safe accommodation).
- The Halo Project, a national by and for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) led charity has its registered offices based in Middlesbrough. The service offers specialist support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and advice and accredited training for agencies and victims.
- ARCH Provides specialist sexual violence and abuse support for adults in Teesside. Services are free, confidential and available to anyone who has experienced any form of sexual abuse or violence, at any time in their life.
- SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) TEESSIDE: The SARC in Teesside provides 24/7 free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years and over in Teesside that have experienced sexual assault including rape in their lifetime.
- The OPCC commission a stalking advocacy service delivered by Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Two Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) across Cleveland work closely with IDVAs in relevant cases to decide who will lead on advocacy for victims.
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a weekly information sharing and action planning meeting between representatives of Cleveland Police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, IDVAs and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors, who hear high risk domestic abuse cases that require immediate safeguarding actions from partner agencies to protect a victim at imminent risk of harm. MARAC referrals are considered from all partner agencies as well as Police.
- MATAAC is a multi-agency tasking and coordination initiative that identifies serial domestic abuse perpetrators (those offending against multiple victims) victims include family members as well as intimate partners.
- Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and relevant educational settings. Police forces have a legal duty to notify a child's educational establishment if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This includes situations where the child sees, hears, witnesses or otherwise experiences the effects of domestic abuse. This includes all children connected to the household, including where children are not physically present during the incident and situations where they might reside in another household temporarily or permanently.
- Clare's Law, officially known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), allows individuals to request information from the police about a partner's or ex-partner's history of abusive or violent behaviour to protect themselves or others at risk.

- The Domestic Abuse Solutions Team is a Cleveland Police unit that works county-wide to protect high-risk, serial, and repeat victims of domestic abuse while working to challenge and change the behaviour of prolific perpetrators. They manage disclosure schemes like Clare's Law and Sarah's Law, act as gatekeepers for protective orders such as Stalking Protection Orders, Sexual Risk Orders, Forced Marriage Prevention Orders and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders. They lead and administer multi-agency forums such as MARAC and MATAC and are actively engaged with MAPPA.

Redcar and Cleveland Council is currently involved in several pilot programmes that are helping us test new ways of working and learn from innovative practice. While these pilots may not continue for the full duration of this Strategy, the insight gained from them is invaluable. We will use the learning from current and future pilot activity to inform our long-term approach, ensuring that the Strategy remains flexible, evidence-led, and able to adapt to emerging best practice. The Strategy's vision and priorities are therefore not dependent on any single programme but are strengthened by the knowledge and experience these pilots provide.

9. Vision and Priorities

Our vision for Redcar and Cleveland is for adults, children, families, and communities to live free from domestic abuse, harm, and fear, supported by a confident, informed system that prevents abuse, responds effectively when it occurs, and holds perpetrators to account.

Priorities

This strategy is built around four key priorities which are designed to contribute to the overall vision for Redcar and Cleveland. These priorities and commitments will form our key areas of work over the next three years and will be the focus of the action plans during this time.

Priority 1 - Prevention and Early Intervention: Our Commitments

To prevent domestic abuse and intervene earlier by addressing root causes, we commit to the following:

- We will **invest in education** for children and young people to promote healthy, respectful relationships, challenge misogynistic and harmful attitudes, and support early identification of abusive behaviours.
- We will **ensure accessible, clear, and inclusive information** so that everyone knows where and how to seek help, and we will act quickly and effectively when individuals reach out, recognising these moments as critical opportunities for intervention.
- We will build **confident and informed communities** that are able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and feel empowered to safely signpost, refer, report, and support, embedding a shared community responsibility for early response.

- We will adopt an **intersectional approach** that recognises and responds to multiple and compounding vulnerabilities, ensuring that prevention and early intervention efforts are tailored to peoples lived experiences.
- We will ensure our approach **reaches all communities**, including LGBTQ+ people, older adults, disabled people, Black and minoritised communities, and those living in rural areas, so that no one is excluded from prevention or support.
- We will **strengthen the skills, knowledge, and confidence of our workforce** across the locality to identify domestic abuse early, respond appropriately, and provide consistent, trauma-informed support.

Priority 2 - Comprehensive support for victims

To ensure victims of domestic abuse receive timely, effective, and holistic support, we commit to the following:

- We will provide **access to safe spaces** and places where victims and their children can feel protected, stabilised, and supported, including safe accommodation, and longer-term accommodation solutions.
- We will deliver **evidence-based interventions** that are trauma-informed and responsive to individual needs, supporting recovery, safety, and long-term wellbeing for victims and their families.
- We will **strengthen Operation Encompass**, ensuring that children who experience domestic abuse are supported promptly and appropriately within education settings through effective information sharing and safeguarding responses.
- We will work with the police to ensure a **victim-centred, suspect-focused, and context-led response**, prioritising victim safety, holding perpetrators to account, and recognising patterns of coercive control and harm over time.
- We will ensure our **support reaches all communities**, including LGBTQ+ people, people from minoritised ethnic and cultural backgrounds, those living in rural areas, and others who may face additional barriers to accessing support.
- We will take a **collaborative, whole-family approach**, using coordinated, multi-agency working to reduce duplication, improve communication, and ensure families receive consistent and joined-up support.
- We will **recognise and respond to digital abuse**, for both children and young people and adults, ensuring victims are supported to understand risk, improve online safety, and address technology-facilitated coercive control and harassment.
- Ensure ongoing **consultation with people affected** by domestic abuse and their families.
- We will **Support prosecutions** where people affected by domestic abuse are not able to support it.

Priority 3 - Changing Abusive Behaviour: Our Commitments

To reduce harm and prevent repeat domestic abuse by addressing perpetrator behaviour, we commit to the following:

- We will **support innovation** and the use of evidence-based good practice, testing and embedding approaches that effectively challenge abusive attitudes and behaviours and promote lasting behaviour change.
- We will support the **delivery of the Tees-wide Tackling Perpetration Strategy** and its workstreams, working collaboratively with partners to ensure a coordinated, consistent, and effective system response across the locality.
- We will actively **support the Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) pilot**, using DAPOs to strengthen perpetrator accountability, improve victim safety, and encourage behaviour change through positive requirements as appropriate.
- We will **intervene early with adolescents** displaying harmful behaviours in intimate relationships, **and with CAPVA**, through trauma-informed, safeguarding-focused approaches that address underlying causes and reduce future harm.
- We will **support the implementation of the Drive Project**, working with high harm, high risk serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent their abusive behaviour and protect victims.

Priority 4 - Strong and Effective Partnerships: Our Commitments

To deliver a coordinated, system-wide response to domestic abuse, we commit to the following:

- We will ensure **effective and lawful information sharing** across the system, enabling partners to build a shared understanding of risk, identify patterns of harm, and respond swiftly and appropriately to protect victims and children.
- We will **strengthen accountability** at all levels, with clear roles, responsibilities, and governance arrangements that ensure partners are jointly responsible for improving outcomes and reducing harm.
- We will **embed a community-wide approach** that equips communities to recognise domestic abuse early, respond safely, and connect people to the right support, alongside statutory services, to prevent harm and reduce escalation.
- We will **maintain and strengthen MARAC** as a key partnership mechanism, ensuring robust multi-agency engagement, high-quality risk analysis, effective action planning, and continual learning to reduce serious harm and repeat victimisation.
- Adopt a **whole system approach** to domestic abuse, recognising the need for increased partnership working to ensure people affected by DA and families can access multi-faceted support, regardless of their primary need or point of entry into services.
- We will **continue to work effectively as a THRIVE partnership** with clear governance and will review the existing THRIVE strategy taking into consideration the priorities in this strategy.

10. Partnership Principles

1. Non-judgmental

We meet every individual with empathy, dignity, and respect, never blaming, minimising, or making assumptions about a victim-survivor's circumstances or choices.

2. Centre Lived Experience

We listen to and learn from those with lived experience. Their insight shapes our understanding, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

3. Work in True Partnership

We recognise that no single organisation can end domestic abuse. We commit to integrated, collaborative working across agencies to create consistency and reduce system gaps. This includes exploring opportunities for collaborative commissioning regarding domestic abuse.

4. Be Trauma-Informed and ACE-Aware

We acknowledge the impact of past trauma, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adapt our practice to avoid re-traumatisation and promote emotional safety.

5. Understand Domestic Abuse in Context

Domestic abuse does not occur in isolation. We recognise the interplay of multiple vulnerabilities and respond holistically.

6. Early Intervention and Prevention

We are committed to identifying domestic abuse and associated harm at the earliest possible opportunity and responding proactively to prevent escalation.

7. Community Awareness and Empowerment

We recognise communities as a vital part of preventing and responding to domestic abuse. We will work to empower communities to recognise abuse, challenge stigma and harmful norms, and promote help-seeking, ensuring that support is visible, accessible and trusted.

8. Recognise Children as Victims in Their Own Right

We acknowledge children as direct victims of domestic abuse and ensure their safety, voice, and recovery needs are integral to every intervention.

9. Professional curiosity

We will promote professional curiosity so that practitioners consistently look beyond presenting needs, identify hidden harm, and respond early and effectively to domestic abuse.

10. Share Responsibility for Risk and Safety

We foster a culture where professionals collectively hold responsibility for managing risk.

11. How will we know we have succeeded?

Ongoing monitoring must be embedded throughout this Strategy. We need to understand whether our approach is effective, responsive to changing needs, and delivering meaningful outcomes. This requires regular review of performance data, alongside continuous reflection on the lived experiences of victims and survivors. Listening to victims and survivors and using what they tell us to improve services is essential.

Priority 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Success will mean domestic abuse is **identified earlier and addressed sooner**, with people supported before harm escalates. Communities, professionals, and children and young people are confident in recognising abuse and accessing clear pathways to help. Fewer families reach crisis point, statutory intervention is reduced, and outcomes for children and adults improve across all communities.

Priority 2: Comprehensive Support for Victims

Success will mean victims and their children are **safer, supported and able to recover**, with timely access to trauma-informed, coordinated support. Services respond consistently to risk, reduce repeat victimisation, and reach all communities. Victims' voices shape provision, and support leads to improved wellbeing, stability and long-term safety.

Priority 3: Changing Abusive Behaviour

Success will mean there is a **reduction in repeat perpetrators and repeat harm**, driven by earlier identification, stronger accountability and effective, evidence-based interventions. Perpetrator risk is managed consistently across agencies, behaviour change is sustained, and victim safety is prioritised at every stage.

Priority 4: Strong and Effective Partnerships

Success will mean partners operate as a **joined-up, accountable system**, sharing information effectively and using data to drive improvement. Multi-agency responses are focused on outcomes, communities play an active role in prevention, and coordinated action across the system leads to safer lives and reduced harm.

12. Governance and Delivery

In addition to the duty to provide support in safe accommodation, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a duty on Local Authorities to establish a Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, which is responsible for supporting Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The DAPB will have oversight and governance for the delivery of this strategy. An Action Plan will be developed to enable progress to be monitored and reported to the DAPB. The DAPB reports quarterly to Redcar and Cleveland's Community Safety Partnership (CSP), and 6 monthly to the South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership (STSCP).

Appendix 1 – Glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience(s)
ASC	Adult Social Care
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAPVA	Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CYP	Children and Young People
DA	Domestic Abuse
DAPB	Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
DAPO	Domestic Abuse Protection Order
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
DVDS	Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare’s Law)
EVA	EVA Women’s Aid
GP	General Practitioner
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
IDAS	Integrated Domestic Abuse and Substance Use (Partnership)
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IPH	Intimate Partner Homicides
ISAC	Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker
ITS	Intuitive Thinking Skills
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspection
LA	Local Authority
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and others
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MATAC	Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination

NHS	National Health Service
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCBC	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
S42	Section 42 (Care Act 2014 Safeguarding Enquiry)
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
STSCP	South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership
SVSDA	Suspected Victim Suicides relating to Domestic Abuse
THRIVE	Integrated Domestic Abuse and Substance Use Partnership model in Redcar and Cleveland
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
YE	Year Ending